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For Faith and Freedom

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'When I came to my senses the captain gave me a glass of cordial.'

For Faith and Freedom

BY

WALTER BESANT

AUTHOR OF 'DOROTHY FORSTER' 'CHILDREN OF GIBEON'
'ALL SORTS AND CONDITIONS OF MEN' ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. III.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY A. FORESTIER AND F. WADDY

London
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1889

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When I came to my Senses the Captain gave me a Glass of Cordial' . . . *Frontispiece*

'This I did, and so stood before them all bare-headed'. . . . . *To face p.* 26

Barnaby holding the Pistol to the poor Wretch's Head, so that he should not bellow and call for Assistance' . . „ 262

FOR FAITH AND FREEDOM.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

THIS was indeed the truth: I had parted with my money on the word of a villain; I put myself into his power by telling him the whole of my sad story; and, on the promise of sending me by ship to my cousins in New England, he had entered my name as a rebel sold to himself (afterwards I learned that he made it appear as if I was one of the hundred given to Mr. Jerome Nipho, all of whom he afterwards bought and sent to the Plantations), and he had then shipped me on board a vessel on the point of sailing with as vile a company of rogues, vagabonds, thieves, and drabs as

were ever raked together out of the streets and the prisons.

When I came to my senses the Captain gave me a glass of cordial, and made me sit down on a gun-carriage while he asked me many questions. I answered him all truthfully, concealing only the reason of my flight and of my visit to Taunton, where, I told him truly, I hoped to see my unhappy friend Miss Susan Blake, of whose imprisonment and death I knew nothing.

'Madam,' said the Captain, stroking his chin, 'your case is indeed a hard one. Yet your name is entered on my list and I must deliver your body at St. Michael's Port, Barbadoes, or account for its absence. This must I do: I have no other choice. As for your being sold to Mr. George Penne by Mr. Jerome Nipho, this may very well be without your knowing even that you had been given to that gentleman by the King. They say that the Maids of Taunton have all been given away, mostly to the Queen's Maids of Honour, and must either be redeemed at a great price

or be sold as you have been. On the other hand, there may be villainy, and in this case it might be dangerous for you to move in the matter lest you be apprehended and sent to jail as a rebel, and so a worse fate happen unto you.'

He then went on to tell me that this pretended merchant, this Mr. George Penne, was the most notorious kidnapper in the whole of Bristol ; that he was always raking the prisons of rogues and sending them abroad for sale on the Plantations ; that at this time he was looking to make a great profit, because there were so many prisoners that all could not be hanged, but most must be either flogged and sent about their business, or else sold to him and his like for servitude. 'As for any money paid for your passage,' he went on, 'I assure you, Madam, upon my honour, that nothing at all has been paid by him ; nor has he provided you with any change of clothes or provisions of any kind for the voyage ; nor hath he asked or bargained for any better treatment of you on board than is given to the rogues

below ; and that, Madam,' he added, 'is food of the coarsest, and planks, for sleep, of the hardest. The letter which you have shown me is a mere trick. I do not think there is any such person in Boston. It is true, however, that there is a family of your name in Boston, and that they are substantial merchants. I make no doubt that as he hath treated you, so he will treat your friends ; and that all the money which he has taken from you will remain in his own pocket.'

'Then,' I cried, 'what am I to do? Where look for help?'

''Tis the damnedest villain!' cried the Captain, swearing after the profane way of sailors. 'When next I put in at the Port of Bristol, if the Monmouth scare be over, I will take care that all the world shall know what he hath done. But, indeed, he will not care. The respectable merchants have nothing to say with him—he is now an open Catholic, who was formerly concealed in that religion. Therefore, he thinks his fortune is at the flood. But what is to be done, Madam?'

'Indeed, Sir, I know not.'

He considered a while. His face was rough and coloured like a ripe plum with the wind and the sun; but he looked honest and he did not, like Mr. Penne, pretend to shed tears over my misfortunes.

'Those who join rebellions,' he said, but not unkindly, 'generally find themselves out in their reckoning in the end. What the deuce have gentlewomen to do with the pulling down of Kings! I warrant, now, you thought you were doing a grand thing, and so you must needs go walking with those pretty fools, the Maids of Taunton! Well; 'tis past praying for. George Penne is such a villain that keelhauling is too good for him. Flogged through the fleet at Spithead he should be. Madam, I am not one who favours rebels; yet you cannot sleep and mess with the scum down yonder. 'Twould be worse than inhuman—their talk and their manners would kill you. There is a cabin aft which you can have. The furniture is mean, but it will be your own while you are aboard. You

shall mess at my table if you will so honour me. You shall have the liberty of the quarter-deck. I will also find for you, if I can, among the women aboard, one somewhat less villainous than the rest, who shall be your grumeta, as the Spaniards say—your servant, that is—to keep your cabin clean and do your bidding. When we make Barbadoes there is no help for it, but you must go ashore with the rest and take your chance.'

This was truly generous of the Captain, and I thanked him with all my heart. He proved as good as his word, for though he was a hard man, who duly maintained discipline, flogging his prisoners with rigour, he treated me during the whole voyage with kindness and pity, never forgetting daily to curse the name of George Penne and drink to his confusion.

The voyage lasted six weeks. At first we had rough weather with heavy seas and rolling waves. Happily, I was not made sick by the motion of the ship, and could always stand upon the deck and look at the waves (a spectacle,

to my mind, the grandest in the whole world). But, I fear, there was much suffering among the poor wretches—my fellow-prisoners. They were huddled and crowded together below the deck; they were all sea-sick; there was no doctor to relieve their sufferings, nor were there any medicines for those who were ill. Fever presently broke out among them, so that we buried nine in the first fortnight of our voyage. After this, the weather growing warm and the sea moderating, the sick mended rapidly, and soon all were well again.

I used to stand upon the quarter-deck and look at them gathered in the waist below. Never had I seen such a company. They came, I heard, principally from London, which is the rendezvous or head-quarters of all the rogues in the country. They were all in rags—had anyone among them possessed a decent coat it would have been snatched from his back the very first day; they were dirty from the beginning; many of them had cuts and wounds on their heads gotten in their fights and quarrels, and these were bound about

with old clouts ; their faces were not fresh-coloured and rosy, like the faces of our honest country lads, but pale and sometimes covered with red blotches, caused by their evil lives and their hard drinking ; on their foreheads was clearly set the seal of Satan. Never did I behold wickedness so manifestly stamped upon the human countenance. They were like monkeys for their knavish and thievish tricks. They stole everything that they could lay hands upon : pieces of rope, the sailors' knives when they could get them, even the marlinspikes if they were left about. When they were caught and flogged they would make the ship terrible with their shrieks, being cowards as prodigious as they were thieves. They lay about all day ragged and dirty on deck, in the place assigned to them, stupidly sleeping or else silent and dumpish, except for some of the young fellows who gambled with cards—I know not for what stakes—and quarrelled over the game and fought. It was an amusement among the sailors to make these lads fight on the forecastle, promising a

pannikin of rum to the victor. For this miserable prize they would fight with the greatest fury and desperation, even biting one another in their rage, while the sailors clapped their hands and encouraged them. Pity it is that the common sort do still delight themselves with sport so brutal. On shore these fellows would be rejoicing in cock-fights and bull-baitings : on board they baited the prisoners.

There were among the prisoners twenty or thirty women, the sweepings of the Bristol streets. They, too, would fight as readily as the men, until the Captain forbade it under penalty of a flogging. These women were to the full as wicked as the men ; nay, their language was worse, insomuch that the very sailors would stand aghast to hear the blasphemies they uttered, and would even remonstrate with them, saying, 'Nan,' or 'Poll'—they were all Polls and Nans—''tis enough to cause the ship to be struck with lightning ! Give over, now ! Wilt sink the ship's company with your foul tongue ? ' But the pro-

mise of a flogging kept them from fighting. Men, I think, will brave anything for a moment's gratification; but not even the most hardened woman will willingly risk the pain of the whip.

The Captain told me that of these convicts, of whom every year whole shiploads are taken to Virginia, to Jamaica, and to Barbadoes, not one in a hundred ever returns. 'For,' he said, 'the work exacted from them is so severe, with so much exposure to a burning sun, and the fare is so hard, that they fall into fevers and calentures. And, besides the dangers from the heat and the bad food, there is a drink called rum, or arrack, which is distilled from the juice of the sugar-cane, and another drink called "mobbie," distilled from potatoes, which inflames their blood, and causes many to die before their time. Moreover, the laws are harsh, and there is too much flogging and branding and hanging. So that some fall into despair and, in that condition of mind, die under the first illness which seizes on them.'

'Captain,' I said, 'you forget that I am also to become one of these poor wretches.'

The Captain swore lustily that, on his return, he would seek out the villain Penne and break his neck for him. Then he assured me that the difference between myself and the common herd would be immediately recognised; that a rebel is not a thief, and must not be so treated; and that I had nothing to fear—nay, that he himself would say what he could in my favour. But he entreated me with the utmost vehemence to send home an account of where I was, and what I was enduring, to such of my friends as might have either money to relieve me from servitude or interest to procure a pardon. Alas! I had no friends. Mr. Boscorel, I knew full well, would move heaven and earth to help me. But he could not do that without his son finding out where I was; and this thought so moved me that I implored the Captain to tell no one who I was, or what was my history; and, for greater persuasion, I revealed to him those parts of my history which I had hitherto con-

cealed, namely, my marriage and the reason of that rash step and my flight.

'Madam,' he said, 'I would that I had the power of revenging these foul wrongs. For them, I swear, I would kidnap both Mr. George Penne and Mr. Benjamin Boscorel; and, look you, I would make them mess with the scum and the sweepings whom we carry for'ard; and I would sell them to the most inhuman of the planters, by whom they would be daily beaten and cuffed and flogged; or, better still, would cause them to be sold at Havana to the Spaniards, where they would be employed, as are the English prisoners commonly by that cruel people, namely, in fetching water under negro overseers. I leave you to imagine how long they would live, and what terrible treatment they would receive.'

So it was certain that I was going to a place where I must look for very little mercy, unless I could buy it; and where the white servant was regarded as worth so many years of work; not so much as a negro, because he doth sooner sink under the hardships of

his lot, while the negro continues frolick and lusty, and marries and has children, even though he has to toil all day in the sun, and is flogged continually to make him work with the greater heart.

Among the women on board was a young woman, not more than eighteen or thereabout, who was called Deb. She had no other name. Her birthplace she knew not; but she had run about the country with some tinkers, whose language she said is called 'Shelta' by those people. This she could still talk. They sold her in Bristol; after which her history is one which, I learn, is common in towns. When the Captain bade her come to the cabin, and ordered her to obey me in whatsoever I commanded, she looked stupidly at him, shrinking from him if he moved, as if she was accustomed (which was indeed the case) to be beaten at every word. I made her first clean herself and wash her clothes. This done, she slept in my cabin, and, as the Captain promised, became my servant. At first she was not

only afraid of ill-treatment, but she would wilfully lie; she purloined things and hid them; she told me so many tales of her past life, all of them different, that I could believe none. Yet when she presently found out that I was not going to beat her, and that the Captain did never offer to cuff or kick her (which the poor wretch expected) she left off telling falsehoods and became as handy, obliging, and useful a creature as one could desire. She was a great, strapping girl, black-eyed and with black hair, as strong as any man, and a good-looking creature as well, to those who like great women.

This Deb, when, I say, she ceased to be afraid of me, began to tell me her true history, which was, I suppose, only remarkable because she seemed not to know that it was shameful and wicked. She lived, as the people among whom she had been brought up lived, without the least sense or knowledge of God; indeed, no heathen savage could be more without religion than the tinkers and gipsies on the road. They have no know-

ledge at all ; they are born ; they live ; they die ; they are buried in a hedgeside, and are forgotten. It was surprising to me to find that any woman could grow up in a Christian country so ignorant and so uncared for. In the end, as you shall hear, she showed every mark of penitence and fell into a godly and pious life.

My Captain continued in the same kindness towards me throughout the voyage—suffering me to mess at his table, where the provisions were plain but wholesome, and encouraging me to talk to him, seeming to take pleasure in my simple conversation. In the mornings when, with a fair wind and full sail, the ship ploughed through the water, while the sun was hot overhead, he would make me a seat with a pillow in the shade, and would then entreat me to tell him about the rebellion and our flight to Black Down. Or he would encourage me in serious talk (though his own conversation with his sailors was over-much garnished with profane oaths), listening with grave face. And sometimes he

would ask me questions about the village of Bradford Orcas, my mother and her wheel, Sir Christopher and the Rector, showing a wonderful interest in everything that I told him. It was strange to see how this man, hard as he was with the prisoners (whom it was necessary to terrify, otherwise they might mutiny), could be so gentle towards me, a stranger, and a costly one too, because he was at the expense of maintaining me for the whole voyage, and the whole time being of good manners, never rude or rough, or offering the least freedom or familiarity—a thing which a woman in my defenceless position naturally fears. He could not have shown more respect unto a Queen. The Lord will surely reward him therefor.

One evening at sunset, when we had been at sea six weeks, he came to me as I was sitting on the quarter-deck and pointed to what seemed a cloud in the west. 'Tis the island of Barbadoes,' he said. 'To-morrow, if this wind keeps fair, we shall make the Port of St. Michael's, which some call the

Bridge, and then, Madam, alas!'—he fetched a deep sigh—'I must put you ashore and part with the sweetest companion that ever sailed across the ocean.'

He said no more, but left me as if he had other things to say but stifled them. Presently the sun went down and darkness fell upon the waters; the wind also fell and the sea was smooth, so that there was a great silence. 'To-morrow,' I thought, 'we shall reach the port, and I shall be landed with these wretches and sent, perhaps, to toil in the fields.' But yet my soul was upheld by the vision which had been granted to me upon the Black Down Hills, and I feared nothing. This I can say without boasting, because I had such weighty reasons for the faith that was in me.

The Captain presently came back to me.

'Madam,' he said, 'suffer me to open my mind to you.'

'Sir,' I told him, 'there is nothing which I could refuse you, saving my honour.'

'I must confess,' he said, 'I have been

torn in twain for love of you, Madam, ever since you did me the honour to mess at my table. Nay, hear me out. And I have been minded a thousand times to assure you first that your marriage is no marriage, and that you have not indeed any husband at all; next, that since you can never go back to your old sweetheart, 'tis better to find another who would protect and cherish you; and thirdly, that I am ready—ay! and longing—now to become your husband and protector, and to love you with all my heart and soul.'

'Sir,' I said, 'I thank you for telling me this, which indeed I did not suspect. But I am (alas! as you know) already married—even though my marriage be no true one—and can never forget the love which I still must bear to my old sweetheart. Wherefore, I may not listen to any talk of love.'

'If,' he replied, 'you were a woman after the common pattern you would right gladly cast aside the chains of this marriage ceremony. But, Madam, you are a saint. Therefore, I refrained.' He sighed. 'I confess

that I have been dragged as by chains to lay myself at your feet. Well ; that must not be.' He sighed again. 'Yet I would save you, Madam, from the dangers of this place. The merchants and planters do, for the most part, though gentlemen of good birth, lead debauched and ungodly lives, and I fear that, though they may spare you the hardships of the field, they may offer you other and worse indignities.'

I answered in the words of David : 'The Lord hath delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear : He will deliver me out of the hand of the Philistines.'

'Nay ; but there is a way ; you need not land at all. It is but a scratch of the pen, and I will enter your name among those who died upon the voyage. There will be no more inquiry, any more than after the other names, and then I can carry you back with me to the Port of London, whither I am bound after taking in my cargo.'

For a space I was sorely tempted. Then I reflected. It would be, I remembered, by

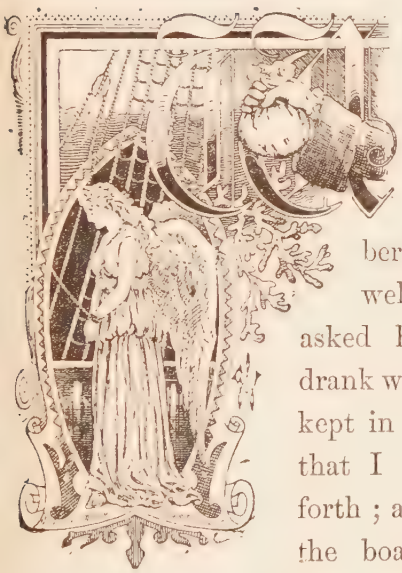
consenting to the Captain's treachery towards his employers, nothing less, that I could escape this lot.

'No, Sir,' I said, 'I thank you from my heart for all your kindness and for your forbearance; but we may not consent together unto this sin. Again, I thank you, but I must suffer what is laid upon me.'

He knelt at my feet and kissed my hands, saying nothing more, and presently I went to my cabin, and so ended my first voyage across the great Atlantic Ocean. In the morning, when I awoke, we were beating off Carlisle Bay, and I felt like unto one of those Christian martyrs, of whom I have read, whom they were about to lead forth and cast unto the lions.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE WHITE SLAVE.



HEN we dropped anchor in the port or road of Carlisle Bay we were boarded by a number of gentlemen, who welcomed the Captain, asked him the news, and drank with him. I meantime kept in my cabin, knowing that I must shortly come forth ; and presently I heard the boatswain's pipe, and the order to all the prisoners to come on deck. Then one knocked softly at my door. It was the Captain.

'Madam,' he said, with a troubled voice,

'it is not too late. Suffer me, I pray you, to enter your name as one of those who died on the voyage. It is no great deception: the villain Penne will alone be hurt by it; and I swear to take you home, and to place you until better times with honest and Godfearing people in London.'

'Oh! Sir!' I replied, 'tempt me not, I pray you. Let me go forth and take my place among the rest.'

He entreated me again, but, finding that he could not prevail, he suffered me to come out. Yet, such was his kindness to the last that he would not place me with the rest, but caused his men to give me a chair on the quarter-deck. Then I saw that we were all to be sold. The prisoners were drawn up standing in lines one behind the other, the men on one side and the women on the other. The hardships of the voyage had brought them so low that, what with their rags and dirt, and their dull scowls and savage faces, and their thin, pale cheeks, they presented a forbidding appearance indeed.

Three or four gentlemen (they were, I found, planters of the island) were examining them, ordering them to lift up their arms, stretch out their legs, open their mouths, and, in short, treating them like so many cattle : at which the women laughed with ribald words, but the men looked as if they would willingly, if they dared, take revenge.

'Faugh !' cried one of the planters. 'Here is a goodly collection indeed ! The island is like to become the dust-heap of Great Britain, where all the rubbish may be shot. Captain, how long before these bags of bones will drop to pieces ? Well, sweet ladies and fair gentlemen'—he made a mock bow to the prisoners—'you are welcome. After the voyage, a little exercise will do you good. You will find the air of the fields wholesome ; and the gentlewomen, I assure you, will discover that the drivers and overseers will willingly oblige any who want to dance with a skipping-rope.'

There were now twenty or thirty gentlemen, all of them merchants and planters, on

board, and a man stepped forward with a book and pencil in hand, who was, I perceived, the salesman.

'Gentlemen,' he said, 'this parcel of servants' (he called them a parcel, as if they were a bale of dry goods) 'is consigned to my care by Mr. George Penne, of Bristol, their owner. They are partly from that city and partly from London, though shipped at the port of Bristol. A tedious voyage, following after a long imprisonment in Newgate and Bridewell, hath, it is true, somewhat reduced them. But there are among them, as you will find on examination, many lusty fellows and stout wenches, and I doubt not that what you buy to-day will hereafter prove good bargains. They are to be sold without reserve, and to the highest bidder. Robert Bull'—he read the first name on the list—'Robert Bull, shoplifter. Stand forth, Robert Bull.'

There arose from the deck where he had been lying a poor wretch who looked as if he could hardly stand, wasted with fever and

privation, his eyes hollow (yet they looked full of wicked cunning). The planters shook their heads.

'Come, gentlemen,' said the salesman, 'we must not judge by appearances. He is at present, no doubt, weak, but not so weak as he looks. I warrant a smart cut or two of the whip would show another man. Who bids for Robert Bull ?'

He was sold after a little parley for the sum of five pounds. Then the speaker called another, naming his offence as a qualification. No pillory could be more shameful. Yet the men looked dogged and the women laughed.

The sale lasted for three or four hours, the prisoners being knocked down, as they say, for various sums, the greatest price being given for those women who were young and strong. The reason, I have been told, is that the women make better servants, endure the heat more patiently, do not commonly drink the strong spirit which destroys the men, and, though they are not so strong, do more work.

Last of all, the man called my name. 'Alice Eykin, Rebel. Stand forth, Alice Eykin, Rebel.'

'Do not go down among them,' said the Captain. 'Let them see at once that yours is no common case. Stand here.'

He led me to the top of the ladder or steps which they call the companion—leading from the waist to the quarter-deck.

'Madam,' he said, 'it will be best to throw back your hood.'

This I did, and so stood before them all bareheaded.

Oh! ye who are women of gentle nurture, think of such a thing as this: to stand exposed to the curious gaze of rough and ribald men; to be bought and sold like a horse or an ox at the fair! At first my eyes swam and I saw nothing, and should have fallen but that the Captain placed his hand upon my arm, and so I was steadied. Then my sight cleared, and I could look down upon the faces of the men below. There was no place whither I could fly and hide. It would

'This I did, and so stood before them all bareheaded.'

be more shameful still (because it might make them laugh) to burst into tears. Why, I thought, why had I not accepted the Captain's offer and suffered my name to be entered as one of those who had died on the voyage and been buried in the sea ?

Down in the waist the gentlemen gazed, and gasped in astonishment. It was no new thing for the planters to buy political prisoners. Oliver Cromwell sent over a shipload of Irishmen first, and another shipload of those engaged in the rising of Penruddock and Grove (among them were gentlemen, divines, and officers, of whom a few yet survived on the island). But as yet no gentlewoman at all had been sent out for political reasons. Wherefore, I suppose, they looked so amazed, and gazed first at me and then at one another and then gasped for breath.

'Alice Eykin, gentlemen,' said the salesman, who had a tongue which, as they say, ran upon wheels, 'is a young gentlewoman, the daughter, I am informed, of the Rev. Comfort Eykin, Doctor of Divinity, deceased,

formerly Rector of Bradford Orcas, in the county of Somerset, and sometime Fellow of his college at Oxford, a very learned Divine. She hath had the misfortune to have taken part in the Monmouth Rebellion, and was one of those Maids of Taunton who gave the Duke his flags, as you have heard by the latest advices. Therefore, she is sent abroad for a term of ten years. Gentlemen, there can be no doubt that her relations will not endure that this young lady—as beautiful as she is unfortunate, and as tender as she is beautiful—should be exposed to the same hard treatment as the rogues and thieves whom you have just had put up for sale. They will, I am privately assured'—I heard this statement with amazement—'gladly purchase her freedom, after which, unless she is permitted to return, the society of our Colony will rejoice in the residence among them of one so lovely and so accomplished. Meantime, she must be sold like the rest.'

'Did Monmouth make war with women for his followers?' asked a gentleman of

graver aspect than most. 'I, for one, will have no part or share in such traffic. Are English gentlewomen, because their friends are rebels, to be sent into the fields with the negroes?'

'Your wife would be jealous,' said another, and then they all laughed.

I understood not until afterwards that the buying and selling of such a person as I appeared to be is a kind of gambling. That is to say, the buyer hopes to get his profit, not by any work that his servant should do, but by the ransom that his friends at home should offer. And so they began to bid, with jokes rude and unseemly, and much laughter, while I stood before them still bare-headed.

'Ten pounds,' one began; 'Twelve,' cried another; 'Fifteen,' said a third; and so on, the price continually rising, and the salesman with honeyed tongue continually declaring that my friends (as he very well knew) would consent to give any ransom—any—so only that I was set free from servitude: until,

for sixty pounds, no one offering a higher price, I was sold to one whose appearance I liked the least of any. He was a gross, fat man, with puffed cheeks and short neck, who had bought already about twenty of the servants.

'Be easy,' he said, to one who asked him how he looked to get his money back. 'It is not for twice sixty pounds that I will consent to let her go. What is twice sixty pounds for a lovely piece like this?'

Then the Captain, who had stood beside me, saying nothing, interfered.

'Madam,' he said, 'you can put up your hood again. And harkee, Sir,' he spoke to the planter, 'remember that this is a pious and virtuous gentlewoman, and'—here he swore a round oath—'if I hear when I make this port again that you have offered her the least freedom—you shall answer to me for it. Gentlemen all,' he went on, 'I verily believe that you will shortly have the greatest windfall that hath ever happened to you, compared with which the Salisbury Rising was but a

fleabite. For the trials of the Monmouth rebels were already begun when I left the port of Bristol, and, though the Judges are sentencing all alike to death, they cannot hang them all—therefore his Majesty's Plantations, and Barbadoes in particular, will not only have whole cargoes of stout and able-bodied servants, compared with whom these poor rogues are like so many worthless weeds; but there will also be many gentlemen, and perhaps gentlewomen—like Madam here—whose freedom will be bought of you. So that I earnestly advise and entreat you not to treat them cruelly, but with gentleness and forbearance, whereby you will be the gainers in the end, and will make their friends the readier to find the price of ransom. Moreover, you must remember that though gentlemen may be flogged at whipping-posts, and beat over the head with canes, as is your habit with servants both black and white, when the time of their deliverance arrives they will be no longer slaves but gentlemen again, and able once more to stand upon the

point of honour and to run you through the body, as you will richly deserve, for your barbarity. And in the same way any gentlewomen who may be sent here have brothers and cousins who will be ready to perform the same act of kindness on their behalf. Remember that very carefully, gentlemen, if you please.'

The Captain spoke to all the gentlemen present, but in the last words he addressed himself particularly unto my new master. It was a warning likely to be very serviceable, the planters being one and all notoriously addicted to beating and whipping their servants. And I have no doubt that these words did a great deal towards assuring for the unfortunate gentlemen who presently arrived such consideration and good treatment as they would not otherwise have received.

The island of Barbadoes, as many people know, is one of the Caribby Islands. It is, as to size, a small place, not more than twenty miles in length by fifteen in breadth, but in population it is a very considerable place

indeed, for it is said to have as many people in it as the City of Bristol. It is completely settled, and of the former inhabitants not one is left. They were the people called Indians or Caribs, and how they perished I know not. The island hath four ports, of which the principal is that of St. Michael or the Bridge, or Bridgetown, in Carlisle Bay. The heat by day is very great, and there is no winter, but summer all the year round. There is, however, a cool breeze from the sea which moderates the heat. A great number of vessels call here every year (there is said to be one every day, but this I cannot believe). They bring to the island all kinds of European manufactures, and take away with them cargoes of Muscovada sugar, cotton, ginger, and logwood. The island hath its shores covered with plantations, being (the people say) already more thickly cultivated than any part of England, with fewer waste places, commons, and the like. The fruits which grow here are plentiful and delicious—such as the pineapple, the pappau, the guava, the

bonannow, and the like—but they are not for the servants and the slaves. The fertility of the country is truly astonishing; and the air, though full of moisture, whereby knives and tools of all kinds quickly rust and spoil, is considered more healthy than that of any other West Indian island. But, for the poor creatures who have to toil in the hot sun, the air is full of fatigue and thirst; it is laden with fevers, calentures, and sunstrokes. Death is always in their midst; and after death, whatever awaits them cannot, I think, be much worse than their condition on the island.

After the sale was finished, the Captain bade me farewell, with tears in his eyes, and we were taken into boats and conveyed ashore, I, for my part, sitting beside my purchaser, who addressed no word at all to me. I was, however, pleased to find that among the people whom he had bought was the girl Deb, who had been my maid (if a woman who is a convict may have a maid who is a sister-convict). When we landed, we walked from

the quay or landing-place to a great building like a barn, which is called a barracoon, in which are lodged the negro slaves and servants before they go to their masters. But at this time it was empty. Hither came presently a certain important person in a great wig and a black coat, followed by two negro beadles, each carrying a long cane or stick. After commanding silence, this officer read to us in a loud voice those laws of the colony which concern servants, and especially those who, like ourselves, are transported for various offences. I forget what these laws were ; but they seemed to be of a cruel and vindictive nature, and all ended with flogging and extension of the term of service. I remember, for instance—because the thought of escape from a place in the middle of the ocean seemed to me mad—that, by the law, if anyone should be caught endeavouring to run away, he should be first flogged and then made to serve three years after his term was expired ; and that no ship was allowed to trade with the island, or to put in for water,

unless the Captain had given security with two inhabitants of the island in the sum of 2,000*l.* sterling not to carry off any servant without the owner's consent.

When these laws had been read, the officer proceeded, further, to inform us that those who were thus sent out were sent to work as a punishment; that the work would be hard, not light; and that those who shirked their work, or were negligent in their work, would be reminded of their duties in the manner common to Plantations; that if they tried to run away they would most certainly be caught, because the island was but small; and that when they were caught, not only would their term of years be increased, but that they would most certainly receive a dreadful number of lashes. He added, further, that as nothing would be gained by malingering, skulking, or laziness, so, on the other hand, our lot might be lightened by cheerfulness, honesty, and zeal. A more surly, ill-conditioned crew I think he must have never before harangued. They listened, and on most faces I read the

determination to do no more work than was forced from them. This is, I have learned, how the plantation servants do commonly begin; but the most stubborn spirit is not proof against the lash and starvation. Therefore, before many days they are as active and as zealous as can be desired, and the white men, even in the fields, will do double the work that can be got out of the black.

Then this officer went away followed by his beadles, who cast eyes of regret upon us, as if longing to stay and exercise their wands of office upon the prisoners' backs. This done, we were ordered to march out. My Master's horse was waiting for him, led by a negro; and two of his overseers, also mounted and carrying whips in their hands, waited his commands. He spoke with them a few minutes, and then rode away.

They brought a long cart with a kind of tilt to it, drawn by two asses (here they call them assinegoes), and invited me courteously to get into it. It was loaded with cases and boxes, and a negro walked beside the beasts. Then

we set out upon our march. First walked the twenty servants—men and women—newly bought by the master; after them, or at their side, rode the overseers, roughly calling on the laggards to quicken their pace, and cracking their whips horribly. Then came the cart in which I sat. The sun was high in the heavens, for it was not more than three of the clock; the road was white and covered with dust; and the distance was about six or seven miles, and we went slowly, so that it was already nigh unto sunset when we arrived at the Master's estate.

Thus was I, a gentlewoman born, sold in the Island of Barbadoes for a slave. Sixty pounds the price I fetched. Oh! even now, when it is all passed long since, I remember still with shame how I stood upon the quarter-deck, my hood thrown back, while all those men gazed upon me, and passed their ribald jests, and cried out the money they would give for me!

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE FIRST DAY OF SERVITUDE.

THUS began my captivity. Thus I began to sit beside the waters of Babylon, more wretched than the daughters of Zion, because they wept together, while I wept alone. I looked for no release or escape until the Lord should mercifully please to call me away by opening the Gate of Death. For even if I were released—if by living out the ten years of servitude I could claim my freedom, of what use would it be to me? Whither could I fly? where hide myself? Yet you shall hear, if you will read, how a way, terrible at first and full of peril, was unexpectedly opened, and in what strange manner was wrought my deliverance.

We arrived at our new Master's estate—

which was, as I have said, about seven miles from the port—towards sundown. We were marched (rather, driven) to a kind of village, consisting of a double row of huts or cottages, forming a broad street, in the middle of which there were planted a large number of the fruit-trees named here bonannows (they are a kind of plantain). The green fruit was hanging in clusters, as yet unripe ; but the leaves, which are also the branches, being for the most part blown into long shreds, or rags, by the wind, had an untidy appearance. The cottages looked more like pigsties for size and shape ; they were built of sticks, withs, and plantain-leaves both for sides and for roof. Chimneys had they none, nor windows ; some of them had no door, but an opening only. Thus are housed the servants and slaves of a plantation. The furniture within is such as the occupants contrive. Sometimes there is a hammock or a pallet with grass mats and rugs ; there are some simple platters and basins. In each hut there are two, three, or four occupants.

Here let me in brief make an end of describing the buildings on this estate, which were, I suppose, like those of every other. If you were to draw a great square, in which to lay down or figure the buildings, you would have in one corner the street or village of the people; next to the village lies the great pond which serves for drinking-water as well as for washing. The negroes are fond of swimming and bathing in it, and they say that the water is not fouled thereby, which I cannot understand. In the opposite corner you must place the Ingenio, or house where the sugar-canes are brought to be crushed and ground, and the sugar is made. There are all kinds of machines, with great wheels, small wheels, cogs, gutters for running the juice, and contrivances which I cannot remember. Some of the Ingenios are worked by a wind-mill, others by horses and assinegoes. There is in every one a still where they make that fiery spirit which they call 'kill-devil.' Near the Ingenio are the stables, where there are horses, oxen, assinegoes, and the curious

beast spoken of in Holy Writ called the camel. It hath been brought here from Africa, and is much used for carrying the sugar. The open space around the Ingenio is generally covered and strewed with trash, which is the crushed stalk of the cane. It always gives forth a sour smell (as if fermenting), which I cannot think to be wholesome. In the fourth corner is the planter's house. Considering that these people sometimes grow so rich that they come home and buy great estates, it is wonderful that they should consent to live in houses so mean and paltry. They are of wood, with roofs so low that one can hardly stand upright in them ; and the people are so afraid of the cool wind which blows from the east that they have neither doors nor windows on that side ; but will have them all towards the west, whence cometh the chief heat of the sun—namely, the afternoon heat. Their furniture is rude, and they have neither tapestry, nor wainscoted walls, nor any kind of ornament. Yet they live always in the greatest luxury, eating and drinking of the best.

Some of the houses — my master's among them—have an open verandah (as they call it: in Somersetshire we should call it a linney) running round three sides of the house, with coarse canvas curtains which can be let down so as to keep out the sun, or drawn up to admit the air. But their way of living—though they eat and drink of the best—is rude, even compared with that of our farmers at home; and a thriving tradesman, say, of Taunton, would scorn to live in such a house as contenteth a wealthy planter of Barbadoes. Behind the house is always a spacious garden, in which grow all kinds of fruits and vegetables, and all round the buildings on every side stretch the broad fields of sugar-canes, which, when they are in their flower or blossom of grey and silver, wave in the wind more beautifully than even a field of barley in England.

On the approach of our party and hearing the voices of the overseers, a gentlewoman (so, at least, she seemed) came out of the house and stood upon the verandah, shading her

eyes and looking at the gang of wretches. She was dressed splendidly in a silken gown and flowered petticoat, as if she was a very great lady indeed; over her head lay a kerchief of rich black lace; round her neck was a gold chain; when she slowly descended the steps of the verandah and walked towards us I observed that she was of a darker skin than it is customary to find at home; it was, indeed, somewhat like the skin of the gipsy people; her features were straight and regular; her hair was quite black; her eyes were also black, and large, shaped like almonds. On her wrists were heavy gold bracelets, and her fingers were loaded with rings. She seemed about thirty years of age. She was a woman of tall and fine presence, and she stood and moved as if she was a Queen. She presently came forth from the verandah and walked across the yard towards us.

'Let me look at them—your new batch,' she said, speaking languidly, and with an accent somewhat foreign. 'How many are there? Where do they come from? Who is this

one, for instance?' She took the girl named Deb by the chin, and looked at her as if she were some animal to be sold in the market. 'A stout wench, truly. What was she over there?'

The overseer read the name and the crimes of the prisoner. Madam (this was the only name by which I knew her) pushed her away disdainfully.

'Well,' she said, 'she will find companions enough here. I hope she will work without the whip. Hark ye, girl,' she added with, I think, kindly intent, 'it goes still to my heart when I hear that the women have been trounced; but the work must be done. Remember that! And who are those—and those?' She pointed with contempt to the poor creatures covered with dirt and dust, and in the ragged, miserable clothes they had worn all the voyage. 'Street sweepings; rogues and thieves all. Let them know,' she said grandly, 'what awaits those who skulk and those who thieve. And whom have we here?'—she turned to me—'Is this some fine city madam fresh from Bridewell?'

'This prisoner,' said the overseer, 'is described as a rebel in the late Monmouth rising.'

'A rebel? Truly?' she asked with curiosity. 'Were Monmouth's soldiers women? We heard by the last ship something of this. Madam, I know not why you must needs become a rebel; but this, look you, is no place for gentlewomen to sit down and fold their arms.'

'Madam,' I replied, 'I look for nothing less than to work, being now a convict (though I was never tried) and condemned—I know not by whom—to transportation, in his Majesty's Plantations.'

'Let me look at your hands,' she said sharply. 'Why, of what use are these little fingers? They have never done any work. And your face—prithee, turn back your hood.' I obeyed, and her eyes suddenly softened. Indeed, I looked not for this sign of compassion, and my own tears began to flow. ''Tis a shame!' she cried. ''Tis a burning shame to send so young a woman—and a gentle-

woman, and one with such a face—to the Plantations! Have they no bowels? Child, who put thee aboard the ship?'

'I was brought on board by one Mr. Penne, who deceived me, promising that I should be taken to New England, where I have cousins.'

'We will speak of this presently. Meantime—since we must by the law find you some work to do—can you sew?'

'Yes, Madam, I can perform any kind of needlework, from plain sewing to embroidery.'

'What mean they,' she cried again, 'by sending a helpless girl alone with such a crew? The very Spaniards of whom they talk so much would blush for such barbarity. Well, they would send her to a convent where the good Nuns would treat her kindly. Madam, or Miss, thou art bought, and the master may not, by law, release you. But there is a way of which we will talk presently. Meanwhile, thou canst sit in the sewing-room, where we may find thee work.'

I thanked her. She would have said more; but there came forth from the house, with staggering step, the man who had bought us. He had now put off his wig and his scarlet coat, and wore a white dressing-gown and a linen nightcap. He had in his hand a whip, which he cracked as he walked.

'Child,' said Madam, quickly, 'pull down your hood. Hide your face. He hath been drinking, and at such times he is dangerous. Let him never set eyes upon thee save when he is sober.'

He came rolling and staggering, and yet not so drunk but he could speak, though his voice was thick.

'Oho!' he cried. 'Here are the new servants. Stand up, every man and woman. Stand up, I say!' Here he cracked his whip, and they obeyed, trembling. But Madam placed herself in front of me. 'Let me look at ye.' He walked along the line, calling the unhappy creatures vile and foul names. O shame! thus to mock their misery! 'What!' he cried. 'You think you have

come to a country where there is nothing to do but lie on your backs and eat turtle and drink mobbie? What! You shall find out your mistake.' Here he cracked his whip again. 'You shall work all day in the field, not because you like it, but because you must. For your food, it shall be loblollie, and for your drink, water from the pond. What, I say! Those who skulk shall learn that the Newgate "cat" is tender compared with her brother of Barbadoes. Tremble, therefore, ye devils all; tremble!'

They trembled visibly. All were now subdued. Those of them who swaggered—the dare-devil reckless blades—when first we sailed were now transformed into cowardly, trembling wretches, all half-starved, and some reduced with fevers, with no more spirit left than enabled them still to curse and swear. The feeblest of mortals, the lowest of human wretches, has still left so much strength and will that he can sink his immortal soul lower still—a terrible power, truly!

Then Madam drew me aside gently, and

led me to a place like a barn, where many women, white and black, sat sewing, and a great quantity of little black babies and naked children played about under their charge. The white women were sad and silent; the blacks, I saw with surprise, were all chattering and laughing. The negro is happy, if he have enough to eat and drink, whether he be slave or free. Madam sat down upon a bench, and caused me to sit beside her.

'Tell me,' she said, kindly, 'what this means. When did women begin to rebel? If men are such fools as to go forth and fight, let them; but for women'——

'Indeed,' I told her, 'I did not fight.'

Then nothing would do but I must tell her all, from the beginning—my name, my family, and my history. But I told her nothing about my marriage.

'So,' she said, 'you have lost father, mother, brother, lover, and friends by this pretty business. And all because they will not suffer the King to worship in his own way. Well, 'tis hard for you. To be

plain, it may be harder than you think, or I can help. You have been bought for sixty pounds, and that not for any profit that your work will bring to the estate, because such as you are but a loss and a burden; but only in the hope that your friends will pay a great sum for ransom.'

'Madam, I have indeed no friends left who can do this for me.'

'If so, it is indeed unfortunate. For presently the Master will look for letters on your behalf, and if none come I know not what he may threaten, or what he may do. But think—try to find someone. Consider, your lot here must be hard at best; whereas, if you are released, you can live where you please; you may even marry whom you please, because beautiful young gentlewomen like yourself are scarce indeed in Barbadoes. 'Tis Christian charity to set you free. Remember, Child, that money will do here what I suppose it will do anywhere—all are slaves to money. You have six months before you in which to write to your friends

and to receive an answer. If in that time nothing comes, I tell thee again, Child, that I know not what will happen. As for the life in the fields, it would kill thee in a week.'

'Perhaps, if the Lord so wills,' I replied, helplessly, 'that may be best. Friends have I none now, nor any whom I could ask for help—save the Lord alone. I will ask for work in the fields.'

'Perhaps he may forget thee,' she said—meaning the Master. 'But no; a man who hath once seen thy face will never forget thee. My dear, he told me when he came home that he had bought a woman whose beauty would set the island in flames. Pray Heaven he come not near thee when he is in liquor. Hide that face, Child. Hide that face. Let him never see thee. Oh! there are dangers worse than labour in the fields—worse than whip of overseer!' She sprang to her feet, and clasped her hands. 'You talk of the Lord's will! What hath the Lord to do with this place? Here is nothing

but debauchery and drinking, cruelty and greed. Why have they sent here a woman who prays?'

Then she sat down again and took my hand.

'Tender maid,' she said, 'thy face is exactly such as the face of a certain saint—'tis in a picture which hangs in the chapel of the convent where the good Nuns brought me up long ago, before I came to this place—long ago. Yes, I forget the name of the saint; thou hast her face. She stood, in the picture, surrounded by soldiers who had red hair, and looked like devils—English devils, the Nuns said. Her eyes were raised to Heaven, and she prayed. But what was done unto her I know not, because there was no other picture. Now she sits upon a throne in the presence of the Mother of God.'

The tears stood in her great black eyes—I take it that she was thinking of the days when she was young.

'Well, we must keep thee out of his way. While he is sober he listens to reason, and

thinks continually upon his estate and his gains. When he is drunk no one can hold him, and reason is lost on him.'

She presently brought me a manchet of white bread and a glass of Madeira wine, and then told me that she would give me the best cottage that the estate possessed, and, for my better protection, another woman to share it with me. I thanked her again, and asked that I might have the girl called Deb, which she readily granted.

And so my first day of servitude ended in thus happily finding a protector. As for the cottage, it was a poor thing; but it had a door, and a window with a shutter. The furniture was a pallet with two thick rugs, and nothing more. My condition was desperate, indeed; but yet, had I considered, I had been, so far, most mercifully protected. I was shipped as a convict (it is true) by a treacherous villain; but on the ship I found a compassionate Captain, who saved me from the company among whom I must otherwise have dwelt. I was sold to a drunken and

greedy planter ; but I found a compassionate woman who promised to do what she could ; and I had for my companion the woman who had become a most faithful maid to me upon the voyage, and who still continued in her fidelity and her love. Greater mercies yet —and also greater troubles—were in store, as you shall see.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON.

THUS delivered from the slavery of the fields, I began to work, an unprofitable servant, among those who made and mended the garments of the servants and negroes. On an estate so large as this there is always plenty to be done by the sempstresses and needlewomen. Thus, to every woman is given by the year four smocks, two petticoats, and four coifs, besides shoes, which are brought from England by the ships. Those who wait in

the house have, in addition, six smocks and three waistcoats. To the men are given six shirts ; and to every man and woman a rug or gown of thick stuff to cast about them when they come home hot, so that they may not catch cold—a thing which throws many into a fever. All these things have to be made and mended on the estate.

As for the children, the little blacks, they run about without clothing, their black skin sufficing. The women who are engaged upon the work of sewing are commonly those of the white servants, who are not strong enough for the weeding and hoeing in the fields, or are old and past hard work. Yet the stuff of which the smocks and shirts are made is so coarse that it tore the skin from my fingers, which, when Madam saw, she brought me fine work—namely, for herself. She was also so good as to provide me with a change of clothes, of which I stood sadly in need, and excused my wearing the dress of the other women. I hope that I am not fond of fine apparel, more than becomes a modest woman, but I confess

that the thought of wearing this livery of servitude, this coarse and common dress of smock, petticoat, and coif, all of rough and thick stuff, like canvas, with a pair of shoes and no stockings, filled my very soul with dismay. None of the many acts of kindness shown me by Madam was more gratefully received than her present of clothes—not coarse and rough to the skin, nor ugly and common, befitting prisoners and criminals, but soft and pleasant to wear, and fit for the heat of the climate. 'Twas no great hardship, certainly, to rise early and to sit all day with needle and thread in a great room well-aired. The company, to be sure, was not what one would have chosen; nor was the language of the poor creatures who sat with me—prison and Bridewell birds, or negro slaves—such as my poor mother would have desired her daughter to hear. The food was coarse; but I was often at the house (when the Master was away), and there Madam would constantly give me something from her own table, a dish of chocolata (rightly called the Indian nectar) made so thick and strong that

a spoon stands upright in it, or a glass of Madeira, if my cheeks looked paler than ordinary. In this country, the great heat of the air seems to suck out and devour the heat of the body, so that those of European birth, if they are not nourished on generous diet, presently fall into a decline or wasting away, as is continually seen in the case of white servants, both men and women, who die early, and seldom last more than five or six years.

Briefly, Madam seemed to take great pleasure in my conversation, and would either seek me in the work-room, or would have me to the house, asking questions as to my former life. For herself, I learned that she was born in Cuba, and had been brought up by Nuns in a convent; but how or why she came to this place, I knew not, nor did I ask. Other gentlewomen of the island I never saw, and I think there were none who visited her. Nor did she show kindness to the women servants (except to myself), treating them all, as is the fashion in that country, as if they were so

many black negroes, not condescending to more than a word or a command; and if this were disobeyed, they knew very well what to expect from her. But to me she continued throughout to be kind and gracious, thinking always how she could lighten my lot.

In this employment, therefore, I continued with such contentment as may be imagined, which was rather a forced resignation to the will of the Lord than a cheerful heart. But I confess that I looked upon the lot of the other women with horror, and was thankful indeed that I was spared the miseries of those who go forth to the fields. They begin at six in the morning, and work until eleven, when they come home to dinner: at one o'clock they go out again and return at sunset, which, in this country, is nearly always about half-past six. But let no one think that work in the fields at Barbadoes may be compared with work in the fields at home; for in England there are cloudy skies and cold wintry days in plenty, but in Barbadoes, save when the rain falls in prodigious quantities, the skies

have no clouds, but are clear blue all the year round: the sun burns with a heat intolerable, so that the eyes are well-nigh blinded, the head aches, the limbs fail, and, but for fear of the lash, the wretched toiler would lie down in the nearest shade. And a terrible thirst (all this was told me by the girl Deb) seizes the throat, all day long, which nothing can assuage but rest. For the least skulking the whip is laid on; and if there be a word of impatience or murmuring, it is called stark mutiny, for which the miserable convict, man or woman, is tied up and flogged with a barbarity which would be incredible to any, were it not for the memory of certain floggings in our own country. Besides the lash, they have also the pillory and the stocks, and the overseers carry in addition to their whip a heavy cane, with which they constantly belabour the slaves, both white and black. I say 'slaves,' because the white servants are nothing less, save that the negroes are far better off, and receive infinitely better treatment than the poor white creatures. Indeed, the negro being

the absolute property of his master, both he and his children, to ill-treat him is like the wanton destruction of cattle on a farm; whereas there is no reason in making the convicts last out more than the ten years of their servitude or even so long, because many of them are such poor creatures when they arrive, and so reduced by the miseries of the voyage, and so exhausted by the hard labour to which they are put, that they bring no profit to the master, but quickly fall ill and die like rotten sheep. Like rotten sheep, I say, they die, without a word of Christian exhortation; and like brute creatures, who have no world to come, are they buried in the ground! Again, the food served out to these poor people is not such as should be given to white people in a hot climate. There is nothing but water to drink, and that drawn from ponds, because in Barbadoes there are few springs or rivers. It is true that the old hands, who have learned how to manage, contrive to make plantain wine, and get, by hook or by crook, mobbie (which is a strong drink made from potatoes), or kill-devil, which is the new

spirit distilled from sugar. Then for solid food, the servants are allowed five pounds of salt beef for each person every week, and this so hard and stringy that no boiling will make it soft enough for the teeth. Sometimes, instead of the beef, they have as much salt fish, for the most part stinking; with this a portion of ground Indian corn, which is made into a kind of porridge, and called loblollie. This is the staple of the food, and there are no rustics at home who do not live better and have more nourishing food.

I do not deny that the convicts are for the most part a most horrid crew, who deserve to suffer if any men ever did; but it was sad to see how the faces of the people were pinched with hunger and wasted with the daily fatigues, and how their hollow eyes were full of despair. Whatever their sins may have been, they were at least made in God's own image: no criminal, however wicked, should have been used with such barbarity as was wreaked upon the people of this estate. The overseers were chosen (being themselves also convicts) for

their hardness of heart. Nay, did they show the least kindness towards the poor creatures whom they drove, they would themselves be forced to lay down the whip of office and to join the gang of those who toiled. And over them was the Master, jealous to exact the last ounce of strength from the creatures whom he had bought. Did the good people of Bristol who buy the sugar and molasses and tobacco of the Indies know or understand the tears of despair and the sweat of agony which are forced with every pound of sugar, they would abhor the trade which makes them rich.

The companion of my sleeping-hut, the girl Deb, was a great, strapping wench, who bade fair to outlast her ten years of servitude, even under the treatment to which, with the rest, she was daily subjected. And partly because she was strong and active, partly because she had a certain kind of beauty (the kind which belongs to the rustic, and is accompanied by good-humour and laughter), she would perhaps have done well, as some of the women do, and ended by marrying an

overseer, but for events which presently happened. Yet, strong as she was, there was no evening when she did not return worn out with fatigue, her cheeks burning, her limbs weary, yet happy because she had one more day escaped the lash, and had the night before her in which to rest. If it is worth noting, the women were from the outset the most willing workers, and the most eager to satisfy their taskmasters; the men, on the other hand, went sullen and downcast, thinking only how to escape the overseer's whip, and going through the work with angry and revengeful eyes. I think that some great mutiny might have happened upon this estate —some wild revenge—so desperate were these poor creatures and so horrible were the scourgings they endured, and the shrieks and curses which they uttered. Let me not speak of these things.

There are other things which make residence in Barbadoes, even to the wealthy, full of annoyances and irritations. The place is filled with cockroaches, great spiders, horrid

scorpions, centipedes, and lizards. There are ants which swarm everywhere and there are clouds of flies, and at night there are moskeetos and merrywings, which by their bites have been known to drive new-comers into fever, or else into a kind of madness.

In the evenings after supper there reigned a melancholy silence in the village, the people for the most part taking rest with weary limbs. Sometimes there would be a quarrel, with horrid oaths and curses and perhaps some fighting; but these occasions were rare.

From the house there came often the noise of singing, drinking, and loud talking when other planters would ride over for a drinking bout. There was also sometimes to be heard the music of the theorbo, upon which Madam played very sweetly, singing Spanish songs; so that it seemed a pity for music so sweet to be thrown away upon this selfish crew. It made me think of Humphrey, and of the sweet and holy thoughts which he would put into rhymes, and then fit the rhymes with music which seemed to breathe those very thoughts.

Alas! In the village of Bradford Orcas there would be now silence and desolation! The good old Squire dead, my father dead, the young men sent to the Plantations, no one left at all but the Rector and Madam his sister-in-law, and I, alas! a slave. Perchance at that moment the Rector might be slowly drawing his bow across the strings of his violoncello thinking of those who formerly played with him; or perhaps he would be sorrowfully taking out his cases and gazing for a little consolation upon the figures of his goddesses and his nymphs. Only to think of the place, and of those who once lived there, tore my poor heart to pieces.

One evening, when there was a great noise and talking at the house, while we were sitting upon our beds with no other light than that of the moon, Madam herself came to the cottage.

'Child,' she said, 'nothing will do but that the gentlemen must see thy beauty. Nay, no harm shall happen while I am there: so much they know. But he hath so bragged

about thy beauty and the great price he will demand for ransom that the rest are mad to see thee. I swear that not the least rudeness shall be offered thee. They are drinking, it is true; but they are not yet drunk. Come!'

So I arose and followed her. First, she took me to her own room, where she took off my hood and threw over me a long white lace mantilla, which covered my head and fell over my shoulders and below the waist.

She sighed as she looked at me.

'Poor innocent!' she said. 'If money could buy that face, there is not a man in the room but would give all he hath and count it gain. Canst thou play or sing?'

I told her that I had some knowledge of the theorbo. Therefore she brought me hers, and bade me sing to the gentlemen and then retire quickly. So I followed her into the living or keeping room, where a dozen gentlemen were sitting round the table. A bowl of punch was on the table, and every man had his glass before him, and a pipe of tobacco in

his hand. Some of their faces were flushed with wine.

'Gentlemen,' said Madam, 'our prisoner hath consented to sing one song to you, after which she will ask permission to bid you good-night.'

So they all clapped their hands and rapped the table, and I, being indeed terrified, but knowing very well that to show fear would be the worst thing I could do, touched the strings and began my song. I sang the song which Humphrey made, and which he sang to the officers at Taunton when the Duke was there.

When I finished, I gave back the theorbo to Madam, curtseyed to the gentlemen, and quickly stepped back to Madam's room, while they all bellowed and applauded and roared for me to come back again. But I put on my hood and slipped out to the cottage, where I lay down beside Deb, and quickly fell asleep. (It is a great happiness, in these hot latitudes, that, when a new-comer hath once got over the trouble of the merrywings, he falleth

asleep the moment he lies down, and so sleeps through the whole night.)

But in the morning Madam came to see me while I was sewing.

'Well, Child,' she said, laughing, 'thou hast gotten a lover who swears that he will soon have thee out of this hell.'

'A lover!' I cried. 'Nay!—that may God forbid!'

''Tis true. Young Mr. Anstiss it is. While thou wast singing he gazed on thy pretty face and listened as one enchanted. I wonder—but no!—thou hast no eyes for such things. And when thou wast gone he offered the Master four times the sum he paid for thee—yea, four times—or six times—saying that he meant honourably, and that if any man dared to whisper anything to the contrary he would cut his throat.'

'Alas! Madam. I must never marry—either this Mr. Anstiss or any other.'

'Tut—tut. This is foolish maid's nonsense. Granted you have lost your old lover, there are plenty more. Suppose he hath lost

his old sweetheart, there are plenty more—as I doubt not he hath already proved. Mr. Anstiss is a very pretty young gentleman ; but the Master would not listen, saying that he waited for the lady's friends.'

And so passed six weeks, or thereabouts, for the only count of time I kept was from Sunday to Sunday. On that day we rested ; the negroes, who are no better than heathens, danced. The white servants lay about in the shade, and drank what they could ; in one cottage only on that godless estate were prayers offered.

And then happened that great event which, in the end, proved to be a change in my whole life, and brought happiness out of misery, and joy out of suffering, though at first it seemed only a dreadful addition to my trouble. Thus is the course of things ordered for us, and thus the greatest blessings follow upon the most threatening juncture. What this was I will tell in a few words.

It was about the third week in September when I embarked, and about the third week

in November when the ship made her port. Therefore, I take it that it was one day about the beginning of the year 1686, when Madam came to the work-room and told me that a ship had arrived carrying a cargo of two hundred rebels and more, sent out to work upon the Plantations, like myself, for the term of ten years. She also told me that the Master was gone to the Bridge in order to buy some of them. Not, she said, that he wanted more hands; but he expected that there would be among them persons of quality, who would be glad to buy their freedom. He still, she told me, looked to make a great profit out of myself, and was thinking to sell me, unless my friends in England speedily sent proposals for my ransom, to the young planter who was in love with me. This did not displease me. I have not thought it necessary to tell how Mr. Anstiss came often to the estate, and continually devised schemes for looking at me, going to the Ingenio, whence he could see those who sat in the work-room, and even sending me letters,

vowing the greatest extravagance of passion—I say, I was not displeased, because there was in this young gentleman's face a certain goodness of disposition clearly marked; so that even if I became his property I thought I might persuade him to relinquish thoughts of love, even if I had to trust myself entirely to his honour and tell him all. But, as you shall hear, this project of the Master's was brought to naught.

As for the rebels, I was curious to see them. Some I might recognise; to some I might perhaps be of a little use at the outset in guarding them against dangers. I did not fear, or think it likely, that there would be any among them whom I might know or who might know me. Yet the thing which I least suspected, and the least feared—a thing which one would have thought so unlikely as to make the event a miracle—nay, call it rather the merciful ordering of all—that thing, I say, actually happened.

The newly-bought servants arrived at about five in the evening.

I looked out of the work-room to see them. Why, I seemed to know their faces—all their faces! They were our brave West Country lads, whom I had last seen marching gallantly out of Taunton town to victory and glory (as they believed). Now—pale with the miseries of the voyage, thin with bad food and disease, hollow-cheeked and hollow-eyed, in rags and dirt, barefooted, covered with dust, grimy for want of washing, their beards grown all over their faces—with hanging heads, stood these poor fellows. There were thirty of them; some had thrown themselves on the ground, as if in the last extremity of fatigue; some stood with the patience that one sees in brute beasts who are waiting to be killed; and in a group together stood three—oh! merciful Heaven! was this misery also added to my cup!—they were Robin, Barnaby, and Humphrey! Robin's face, heavy and pale, betrayed the sorrow of his soul. He stood as one who neither careth for nor regardeth anything. My heart fell like lead to witness the despair which was visible in his attitude, in

his eyes, in his brow. But Barnaby showed still a cheerful countenance and looked about him, as if he was arriving a welcome guest instead of a slave.

'Do you know any of them, Child?' Madam asked.

'Oh! Madam,' I cried; 'they are my friends—they are my friends. Oh! help them—help them!'

'How can I help them?' she replied coldly. 'They are rebels, and they are justly punished. Let them write home for money if they have friends, and so they can be ransomed. To make them write the more movingly, the master hath resolved to send them all to work in the fields. "The harder they work," he says, "the more they will desire to be free again."'

In the fields! Oh! Robin—my poor Robin!

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

HUMPHREY'S NARRATIVE.

WITH these words—'Oh! Robin! Robin!'—the history, as set down in my Mistress's handwriting, suddenly comes to an end. The words are fitting, because her whole heart was full of Robin, and though at this time it seemed to the poor creature a sin still to nourish affection for her old sweetheart, I am sure—nay, I have it on her own confession—that there was never an hour in the waking day when Robin was not in her mind, though between herself and her former lover stood the dreadful figure of her husband. I suppose that, although she began this work with the design to complete it, she had not the courage, even when years had passed away and much earthly happiness had

been her reward, to write down the passages which follow. Wherefore (and for another reason—namely, a confession which must be made by myself before I die) I have taken upon myself to finish that part of Alice Eykin's history which relates to the Monmouth rising and its unhappy consequences. You have read how (thanks to my inexperience and ignorance of conspiracies, and belief in men's promises) we were reduced to the lowest point of disgrace and poverty. Alice did not tell, because till afterwards she did not know, that on Sir Christopher's death his estate was declared confiscated, and presently bestowed upon Benjamin by favour of Lord Jeffreys; so that he whose ambition it was to become Lord Chancellor was already (which he had not expected) the Lord of the Manor of Bradford Orcas. But of this hereafter.

I have called her my Mistress. Truly, all my life she hath been to me more than was ever Laura to Petrarch, or even Beatrice to the great Florentine. The ancients represented every virtue by a Goddess, a Grace, or a

Nymph. Nay, the Arts were also feminine (yet subject to the informing influence of the other sex, as the Muses had Apollo for their director and chief). To my mind every generous sentiment, every worthy thought, all things that are gracious, all things that lift my soul above the common herd, belong not to me, but to my Mistress. In my youth it was she who encouraged me to the practice of those arts by which the soul is borne heavenwards—I mean the arts of poetry and of music : it was she who listened patiently when I would still be prating of myself, and encouraged the ambitions which had already seized my soul. So that if I turned a set of verses smoothly, it was to Alice that I gave them, and for her that I wrote them. When we played heavenly music together, the thoughts inspired by the strain were like the Italian painter's vision of the angels which attend the Virgin—I mean that, sweet and holy as the angels are, they fall far short of the holiness and sweetness of her whom they honour. So, whatever my thoughts or my ambitions,

amidst them all I saw continually the face of Alice, always filled with candour and with sweetness. That quality which enables a woman to think always about others, and never about herself, was given to Alice in large and plenteous measure. If she talked with me, her soul was all mine. If she was waiting on Madam, or upon Sir Christopher, or upon the Rector, or on her own mother, she knew their inmost thoughts and divined all their wants. Nay, long afterwards, in the daily exercise of work and study, at the University of Oxford, in the foreign schools of Montpellier, Padua, and Leyden, it was Alice who, though far away, encouraged me. I could no longer hear her voice; but her steadfast eyes remained in my mind like twin stars that dwell in Heaven. This is a wondrous power given to a few women, that they should become as it were angels sent from Heaven, lent to the earth a while, in order to fill men's minds with worthy thoughts, and to lead them in the heavenly way. The Romish Church holds that the age of miracles hath never

passed; which I do also believe, but not in the sense taught by that Church. Saints there are among us still, who daily work miracles, turning earthly clay into the jasper and the precious marble of Heaven!

Again, the great poet Milton hath represented his virtuous lady unharmed among the rabble rout of Comus, protected by her virtue alone. Pity that he hath not also shown a young man led by that sweet lady, encouraged, warned, and guarded along that narrow way, beset with quag and pitfall, along which he must walk who would willingly climb to higher place! And all this apart from earthly love, as in the case of those two Italian poets.

More, I confess, I would have had, and presumptuously longed for it—nay, even prayed for it with such yearnings and longings as seemed to tear my very heart asunder. But this was denied to me.

In September, 1685, ten weeks after the fight of Sedgemoor, we, being by that time well tired of Exeter Prison, were tried by Lord Jeffreys. It was no true trial, for we

were all advised to plead guilty, upon which the Judge bellowed and roared at us, abusing us in such language as I never thought to hear from the bench, and finally sentenced us all to death. (A great deal has been said of this roaring of the Judge, but I am willing to excuse it in great measure, on the ground of the disease from which he was then suffering. I myself, who had heard that he was thus afflicted, saw the drops of agony upon his forehead, and knew that if he was not bawling at us he must have been roaring on his own account.) So we were marched back to prison and began to prepare for the last ceremony, which is, I think, needlessly horrible and barbarous. To cut a man open while he is still living is a thing not practised even by the savage Turk. At this gloomy time my cousin Robin set a noble example of fortitude which greatly encouraged the rest of us. Nor would he ever suffer me to reproach myself (as I was continually tempted to do) with having been the cause of the ruin which had fallen upon the whole of our unfortunate house. Nay, he

went further, and insisted, and would have it, that had I remained in Holland he himself would have joined the Duke, and that I was in no way to blame as an inciter to this unfortunate act. We knew by this time that Sir Christopher had been arrested and conveyed to Ilminster Jail, and that with him were Dr. Eykin, grievously wounded, and Barnaby; and that Alice, with her mother, was also at Ilminster. Mr. Boscorel, for his part, was gone to London in order to exert whatever interest he might possess on behalf of all. With him went Madam, Robin's mother; but she returned before the trial, much dejected, so that we were not encouraged to hope for anything from that quarter. Madam began to build some hopes at this time from Benjamin, because he, who had accompanied the Judges from London, was the boon companion every night of Lord Jeffreys himself. But it is one thing to be permitted to drink and sing with a great man at night, and another thing to procure of him the pardon of rebels (and those not the com-

mon sort, but leaders and captains). That Benjamin would attempt to save us I did not doubt ; because in common decency and humanity he must needs try to save his grandfather and his cousins. But that he would effect anything—that, indeed, I doubted. Whether he did make an attempt, I know not. He came not to the prison, nor did he make any sign that he knew we were among the prisoners. What he contrived, the plot which he laid, and the villainy with which he carried it out, you have already read. Well, I shall have much more to say about Benjamin. For the moment, let him pass.

I say, then, that we were lying in Exeter Jail expecting to be called out for execution at any hour. We were sitting in the courtyard on the stone bench with gloomy hearts.

'Robin—Humphrey—lads both !' cried a voice we knew. It was the Rector, Mr. Boscorel himself, who called us. 'Courage, lads !' he cried (yet looked himself as mournful as man can look). 'I bring you good news—I

have this day ridden from Ilminster (there is other news not so good)—good news, I say: for you shall live, and not die! I have so far succeeded that the lives are spared of Robin Challis, Captain in the Rebel Cavalry; Barnaby Eykin, Captain of the Green Regiment; and Humphrey Challis, Chyrurgeon to the Duke. Yet must you go to the Plantations—poor lads!—there to stay for ten long years. Well, we will hope to get your pardon and freedom long before that time is over. Yet you must, perforce, sail across the seas.'

'Lad,' cried Robin, catching my hand, 'cease to tear thy heart with reproaches! See! none of us will die, after all.'

'On the scaffold, none,' said Mr. Boscorel. 'On the scaffold, none,' he repeated.

'And what saith my grandfather, Sir?' Robin asked. 'He is also enlarged, I hope, at least. And how is the learned Dr. Eykin? and Alice—my Alice—where is she?'

'Young men,' said the Rector, 'prepare for tidings of the worst—yes; of the very worst. Cruel news I bring to you, boys; and

for myself'—he hung his head—'cruel news, shameful news!'

Alas! you know already what he had to tell us. Worse than the death of that good old man, Sir Christopher; worse than the death of the unfortunate Dr. Eykin and his much-tried wife; there was the news of Alice's marriage and of her flight, and at hearing this we looked at each other in dismay, and Robin sprang to his feet and cried aloud for vengeance upon the villain who had done this thing.

'It is my own son,' said Mr. Boscorel: 'yet spare him not! He deserves all that you can call him, and more. Shameful news I had to tell you. Where the poor child hath found a retreat or how she fares, I know not. Robin, ask me not to curse my own son—what is done will bring its punishment in due time. Doubt it not. But of punishment we need not speak. If there were any way—any way possible—out of it! But there is none. It is a fatal blow. Death itself alone can release her. Consider, Humphrey, consider; you are

not so distracted as your cousin. Consider, I say, that unhappy girl is Benjamin's lawful wife. If he can find her, he may compel her to live with him. She is his lawful wife, I say. It is a case in which there is no remedy; it is a wickedness for which there is no help, until one of the twain shall die.'

There was indeed no help or remedy possible. I will not tell of the madness which fell upon Robin at this news, nor of the distracted things he said, nor how he wept for Alice at one moment and the next cursed the author of this wickedness. There was no remedy. Yet Mr. Boscorel solemnly promised to seek out the poor innocent girl, forced to break her vows for the one reason which could excuse her—namely, to save the lives of all she loved.

'They were saved already,' Mr. Boscorel added. 'He knew that they were saved. He had seen me; he had the news that I brought from London; he knew it; and he lied unto her! There is no single particular in which his wickedness can be excused or defended.

Yet, I say, curses are of no avail. The Hand of God is heavy upon all sinners, and will presently fall upon my unhappy son—I pray that before that Hand shall fall his heart may be touched with repentance.'

But Robin fell into a melancholy from which it was impossible to arouse him. He who, while death upon the scaffold seemed certain, was cheerful and brave, now, when his life was spared, sat heavy and gloomy, speaking to no one; or if he spoke, then in words of rage and impatience.

Mr. Boscorel remained at Exeter, visiting us daily until the time came when we were removed. He brought with him one day a smooth-tongued gentleman in sober attire who was, he told us, a West Indian merchant of Bristol, named George Penne. (You have read, and know already, how great a villain was this man.)

'This gentleman,' said Mr. Boscorel, 'is able and willing, for certain considerations, to assist you in your exile. You have been given (among many others) by the King to

one Mr. Jerome Nipho, who hath sold all his convicts to this gentleman. In his turn, he is under bonds to ship you for the Plantations, where you will be sold again to the planters.'

'Sirs,' Mr. Penne looked from one to the other of us with compassionate eyes, 'I have heard your melancholy case, and it will be to my great happiness if I may be able in any way to soften the rigours of your exile. Be it known to you that I have correspondents in Jamaica, Barbadoes, and Virginia, and that for certain sums of money these—my friends—will readily undertake to make your servitude one merely in name. In other words, as I have already informed his Reverence, I have bought you in the hope of being useful to you (I wish I could thus buy all unhappy prisoners), and I can, on paying my friends what they demand, secure to you freedom from labour, subject only to the condition of remaining abroad until your term is expired, or your friends at home have procured your pardon.'

'As for the price, Humphrey,' said Mr.

Boscorel, 'that shall be my care. It is nearly certain that Sir Christopher's estates will be confiscated, seeing that he died in prison under the charge of high treason, though he was never tried. Therefore we must not look to his lands for any help. What this gentleman proposes is, however, so great a thing that we must not hesitate to accept his offer gratefully.'

'I must have,' said Mr. Penne, 'seventy pounds for each prisoner. I hear that there is a third young gentleman of your party now in the same trouble at Ilminster; I shall therefore ask for two hundred guineas—two hundred guineas in all. It is not a large sum in order to secure freedom. Those who cannot obtain this relief have to work in the fields or in the mills under the hot sun of the Spanish Main; they are subject to the whip of the overseer; they have wretched food; they are worse treated than the negroes, because the latter are slaves for life and the former for ten years only. By paying two hundred guineas only you will all be enabled

to live at your ease. Meanwhile, your friends at home will be constantly endeavouring to procure your pardon. I myself, though but a simple merchant of Bristol City, can boast some influence, which I will most readily exert to the utmost in your behalf '——

'Say no more, Sir,' said Mr. Boscorel, interrupting him; 'the bargain is concluded. These young gentlemen shall not be subjected to any servitude; I will pay you two hundred guineas.'

'I would, Sir'—Mr. Penne laid his hand, which was large, white, and soft, the hand of a liar and a traitor, upon his treacherous heart —'I would to Heaven, Sir,' he said, 'that I could undertake this service for less. If my correspondents were men of tender hearts, the business should cost you nothing at all. But they are men of business; they say that they live not abroad for pleasure, but for profit; they cannot forego any advantage that may offer. s for me, this job brings me no profit. Upon my honour, gentlemen, profit from such a source I should despise: every guinea

that you give me will be placed to the credit of my correspondents, who will, I am assured, turn a pretty penny by the ransom of the prisoners. But that we cannot help. And as for me—I say it boldly in the presence of this learned and pious clergyman—I am richly rewarded with the satisfaction of doing a generous thing. That is enough, I hope, for any honest man.'

The fellow looked so benevolent, and smiled with so much compassion, that it was impossible to doubt his word. Besides, Mr. Boscorel had learned many things during the journey to London; among others that it would be possible to buy immunity from labour for the convicts. Therefore, he hesitated not, but gave him what he demanded, taking in return a paper, which was to be shown to Mr. Penne's correspondents, in which he acknowledged the receipt of the money, and demanded in return a release from actual servitude. This paper I put carefully in my pocket, with my note-book and my case of instruments.

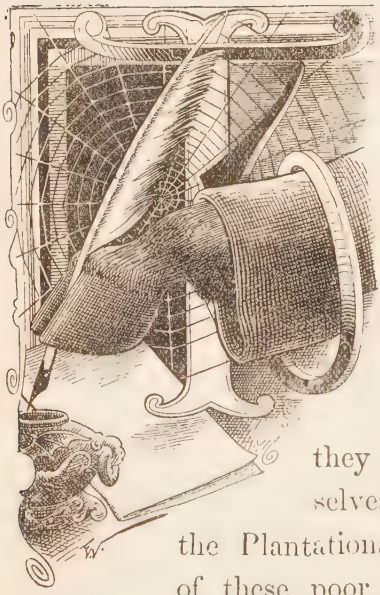
It was, so far as my memory serves me, about six weeks after our pardon was received when we heard that we were to be marched to Bristol, there to be shipped for some port or other across the ocean. At Taunton we were joined by a hundred poor fellows as fortunate as ourselves; and at Bridgwater by twenty more, whose lives had been bought by Colonel Kirke. Fortunate we esteemed ourselves; for everywhere the roads were lined with legs, heads, trunks, and arms, boiled and blackened in pitch, stuck up for the terror of the country. Well; you shall judge how fortunate we were.

When we reached Bristol, we found Mr. Penne upon the Quay, with some other merchants. He changed colour when he saw us; but quickly ran to meet us, and whispered that we were on no account to betray his goodness in the matter of ransom, otherwise it might be the undoing of us all, and perhaps cause his own imprisonment. He also told me that the ship was bound for Barbadoes, and we should have to mess with the

other prisoners on the voyage, but that it would all be made up to us when we arrived. He further added that he had requested his correspondents to entertain us until money should arrive from England, and to become our bankers for all that we should want. And with that he clasped my hand tenderly, and with a 'God be wi' ye!' he left us, and we saw him no more.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

FOR TEN YEARS.



WAS a numerous company gathered together on the deck of the ship. By their dress they were country lads; by their pale cheeks they were prison birds, like ourselves; by their dismal faces they were, also, like ourselves, rebels condemned to the Plantations. Alas! how many of these poor fellows have returned to their homes, and how many lie in the graves of Jamaica, Virginia, and Barbadoes?

As for preparations for a voyage, not one of us could make any, either of clothes or of provisions. There was not among the whole company so much as a change of clothes; nay, there was not even a razor, and our faces were already bristling horribly with the beards which before long made us look like so many Heyducs.

Among them I presently discerned, to my great surprise and joy, none other than Barnaby. His coat of scarlet was now so ragged and stained that neither colour nor original shape could be discerned, his ruffles and cravat of lace were gone, and the scarlet sash which had formerly carried his hanger was gone also. In a word, he was in rags and covered with the dust of the road. Yet his jolly countenance showed a satisfaction which contrasted greatly with the dejection of his companions. He sniffed the scent of tar and ropes with a joy which was visible to all, and he contemplated the ship and her rigging with the air of one who is at home.

Then he saw us and shouted to us

while he made his way roughly through the rest.

'What cheer, ho! Humphrey, brave lad of boluses?' never did any man grasp the hand of friend with greater vigour. 'This is better, I say, than the accursed prison, where one got never a breath of fresh air. Here one begins to smell salt water and tarred rope, which is a downright wholesome smell. Already I feel hearty again. I would willingly drink a tankard or two of black beer. What, Robin, what? We are not going to be hanged, after all. Lift up thy head, therefore: is this a time for looking glum? We shall live to hang Judge Jeffreys yet!—what? Thy looks are but poorly, lad. Is it the prison or is it thy disappointment? That villain, Benjamin! Hark ye, Robin'—some men's faces look black when they threaten, but Barnaby's grew broader, as if the contemplation of revenge made him the happier—'Hark ye, this is my business. No one shall interfere with me in this. Benjamin is my affair. No one but I myself must kill Benja-

min, not you, Humphrey, because he is your cousin; not you, Robin, because you must not kill Alice's husband even to get back your own sweetheart.' Barnaby spoke wisdom here; in spite of Robin's vows he could not get Alice for himself by killing her husband, unworthy though he was. 'Benjamin,' he went on, 'may call her wife, but if he seek to make her his wife, if I know Sis aright, he will meet his match. As for her safety, I am certain that she is safe. For why? Wherever there are folks of her religious kidney, there will she find friends. Cheer up, Robin! Soon or late I will kill this fine husband of hers.'

But Robin shook his head.

Barnaby then asked if I knew whither we were bound. I told him Barbadoes, according to the information given me by Mr. Penne.

'Why,' said Barnaby rubbing his hands, 'this is brave news, indeed. There is no place I would sooner choose. 'Tis a small island, to begin with: give me a small island, so that the sea runneth all round about and is

everywhere within easy reach. Where there is the sea there are boats; where there are boats there are the means of escape. Cheer up, my lads! I know the Spanish Main right well. Give me a tight boat, I care not how small, and a keg of water, and I will sail her anywhere. Ha! we are bound to Barbadoes, are we? This is truly brave news!'

I asked him, next, what kind of place it was.

'It is a hot place,' he replied. 'A man is always thirsty, and there is plenty to drink except water, which is said to be scarce. But the merchants and the planters want none. They have wine of the best, of Spain and of France and of Madeira. Cider and strong ale they import from England. And drinks they make in the country—perino and mobbie—I remember—grippo and plantain wine and kill-devil. 'Tis a rare country for drink, and many there be who die of too much. Hold up thy head, Robin; we will drink damnation to Benjamin yet. But 'tis I who

shall kill him. Courage, I say. What? Our turn will come!'

I told him, then, what had been done with Mr. George Penne—namely, the ransom bought by the Rector for us all, and the letter which I carried to Mr. Penne's correspondent.

'Why,' he said, with some discontent, 'we shall not be long upon the island after all, and perhaps the money might have been better bestowed. But 'twas kindly done of the Rector. As for the banishment, I value it not one farthing. One place is as good as another; and, for my own part, I love the West Indies. We shall have our choice among them all, because, where there are boats and the open sea, a man can go whithersoever pleaseth him best. The voyage out'—he glanced round him—'will, I fear, be choking work—the rations will be short, there will be neither drink nor tobacco, and at nights we shall lie close. A more melancholy company I never saw. Patience, my lads; our turn will come.'

Well, 'twas a special mercy that we had with us one man, at least, who preserved his cheerfulness, for the rest of the company were as melancholy as King James himself could have desired. Indeed, to look back upon the voyage is to recall the most miserable time that can be imagined. First of all, as I have said, we were wholly unprepared for a voyage, having nothing at all with us. Then we had bad weather at the outset, which not only made our people ill, but caused the biscuit to be mostly spoiled, so that before the end of the voyage a few peas with the sweepings of the biscuit-room, and sometimes a little tough beef, was all our diet, and for drink nothing, not so much as a pannikin of beer, but water, and that turbid, and not too much of it.

As for me, I kept my health chiefly by the method common among physicians—namely, by watching the symptoms of others. But mostly was I concerned with the condition of Robin. For the poor lad, taking so much to heart the dreadful villainy which had been practised upon Alice, never once held up

his head, and would talk and think of nothing else but of that poor maid.

'Where is she?' he asked a hundred times. 'Where hath she found a shelter and a hiding-place? How shall she escape the villain who will now do what he pleases since we are out of his way? And no help for her—not any until she die, or until he dies! And we cannot even send her a letter to console her poor heart! Humphrey, it drives me mad to think that every day carries us further from her. If I could but be with her to protect her against her husband! Humphrey, Barnaby said well: I could not get her back to me over the dead body of her husband. But to protect her—to stand between her and the man she hath sworn to obey!'

There is no more dangerous condition of the mind than that which we call despair. It is, I take it, a disease, and that of the most dangerous kind. I have observed many men in that condition. With some, the devil enters into them, finding all the doors open

and unguarded ; nay, he even receives a warm welcome. With others it is as if the body itself was left without its armour—a cheerful and hopeful mind being certainly an armour against disease, capable of warding off many of those invisible arrows which are always flying about the air and striking us down with fevers, agues, calentures, and other pains and grievous diseases.

I marvel that more of the men on board were not sick ; for, to begin with, the water soon became thick and swarmed with wriggling creatures difficult to avoid in drinking ; and then, though during the day we were allowed to be on deck (where the air was fresh even if the sun was hot), at night we were terribly crowded below, and lay too close for health or for comfort. However, we finally made Carlisle Bay and the port of St. Michael's or the Bridge. And I must say this for Barnaby, that he maintained throughout the whole voyage his cheerfulness, and that he never ceased to make his plans for escape, drawing on a paper, which he procured,

a rough chart of the Spanish Main, with as many islands as he could remember. Of these there are hundreds, some desolate and safe for fugitives, some with neither water nor green trees, and some with springs and woods, wild fruit, land turtles on the shore, fish in the sea, and everything that man can desire.

We made the land, after I know not how many weeks, one day in the forenoon.

'Barbadoes,' said Barnaby, pointing to a little cloud far away on the horizon. 'Well; of this job I am wellnigh sick. To-morrow, if the wind holds, we shall have sailed round the island and shall beat up for Carlisle Bay. Well, it is lucky for us that we have this letter of Mr. Penne's. We will go—I know the place well—to the sign of the Rock and Turtle, kept by old Mother Rosemary, if she lives still, or, if she be dead, by one of her daughters—she had fifty daughters, at least, all buxom mulatto girls. There we will put off these filthy rags, have a wash in a tub of fresh water, get shaven, and then with smooth chins and clean shirts we will sit down to a

dinner such as the old woman knows how to make, a potato-pudding and Scots collops with Rhenish wine, and afterwards a cool cup of beveridge, which is nothing in the world but squeezed limes, with sugar and water, fit for such a womanly stomach as yours, Doctor. With this, and a pipe of tobacco, and perhaps a song and (when your Worship hath gone to bed) a dance from one of the girls—I say, my lad, with this I shall be ready to forget Sedgemoor and to forgive Judge Jeffreys. When we are tired of Barbadoes, we will take boat and sail away. I know one island, at least, where they care nothing for King James. Thither will we go, my lad.'

Well; what we found at our port, and how we fared, was not quite as Barnaby expected and hoped, as you shall hear. But I must admire the cunning of the man Penne, who not only took from Alice—poor child!—all her brother's money, amounting to two hundred and fifty pounds or thereabouts (which you have read), on the pretext of bestowing it for the advantage of all, but also

received two hundred guineas from Mr. Boscorel on the same pretence. This made in all four hundred and fifty pounds. And not one penny—not a single penny—of this great sum did the man spend upon the purpose for which it was given him.

You have heard how the merchants and planters came aboard the ships which put in with servants and slaves, and how these are put up for sale one at a time. As was the sale described by Alice, just such was ours: though, I take it, our lads were not so miserable a company as were those on board her ship. Pale of cheek they looked, and dejected, and some were sick with various disorders, caused by the confinement of the prison or the sufferings of the voyage. They put us up one after the other and we were sold. I forget what I myself fetched, and indeed it matters not, save that many jests were passed at our expense, and that when one was put up—as Robin, for instance—who had been a Captain in the rebel army, the salesman was eloquent in praise of his rich and illus-

trious family who would never endure that this unfortunate man should continue in servitude. But Barnaby put his tongue in his cheek and laughed.

When the sale was concluded, we were bundled into boats and taken ashore to the barracoon, of which you have heard from Alice. Here the same officer as read to her party the laws concerning servants and their duties, and the punishments which await transgressors, read them also to ourselves.

'Faith,' Barnaby whispered, 'there will be a great scoring of backs before many days are done, unless their bark is worse than their bite.'

This business despatched, I thought it was time to present my letter. Therefore I stepped forward, and informed the officer who, by reason of his gown and wig and the beadles who were with him, I judged to be some lawyer, that, with my cousin and another, I held a letter which should hold us free from servitude.

'Ay, ay,' he said. 'Where is that letter?'

So I gave it to him. 'Twas addressed to one Jonathan Polwhele, and enjoined him to receive the three prisoners, named Humphrey Challis, Robin Challis, and Barnaby Eykin, to pay for them such sums as would reasonably be required to redeem them from servitude, and to advance them such moneys as they would want at the outset for maintenance, the whole to be accounted for in Mr. Jonathan Polwhele's next despatches to his obedient, much obliged servant, G. P.

'Sir,' said the officer, when he had read the letter through, 'this epistle is addressed to one Jonathan Polwhele. There is no merchant or planter of that name on the whole island.'

He gave me back the letter. 'If this,' he said, 'is all you have to show, there is no reason why you and your friends should not march with the rest.'

Truly, we had nothing else to show. Not only was there no one named Polwhele on the island, but there never had been anyone

of that name. Therefore it was plain that we had been tricked, and that the man George Penne was a villain. Alas ! poor Barnaby. Where now were his cool cups and his pipe of tobacco ? Then the officer beckoned to a gentleman—a sober and grave person—standing near, and spoke to him.

'Gentlemen,' said the merchant, 'permit me to read this letter. So, it is in the handwriting of Mr. George Penne, which I know well. There is here some strange mistake. The letter is addressed to Mr. Jonathan Polwhele ; but there is no one of that name in the place. I am myself Mr. Penne's correspondent in this island. My name, gentlemen, is Sefton, not Polwhele.'

'Sir,' I said, 'do you know Mr. Penne ?'

'I have never seen him. He consigns to my care once or twice a year a cargo of transported servants, being rogues and thieves sent here, instead of to the gallows. He ships them to my care, I say, as he hath shipped the company arrived this morning ; and I sell them for him, taking for my share a percentage, as

agreed upon, and remitting to him the balance in sugar and tobacco.'

'Is there no letter from him?'

'There is a letter in which he advises me of so many rebels consigned to me in order to be sold. Some among them, he says, were captains and officers in Monmouth's army, and some are of good family, among whom he especially names Robin and Humphrey Challis. But there is not a word about ransom.'

'Sir,' I said, knowing nothing as yet of Alice and her money, 'two hundred guineas have been paid to Mr. Penne by the Rev. Philip Boscorel, Rector of Bradford Orcas, in the county of Somerset, for our ransom.'

'Nothing is said of this,' he replied gravely. 'Plainly, gentlemen, without despatches from Mr. Penne I cannot act for you. You have a letter; it is written by that gentleman; it is addressed to Mr. Polwhele; it says nothing about Barbadoes, and would serve for Jamaica or Virginia. So great a sum as two hundred guineas cannot have been forgotten. I exhort you, therefore, to patience until other letters

arrive. Why, two hundred guineas would have gone far to redeem you all three, and to maintain you for a great while. Gentlemen, I am grieved for you, because there is for the present no help for it, but that you must go with the planter who hath bought you, and obey his orders. I will, however, send to Mr. Penne an account of this charge, and I would advise that you lose no time in writing to your friends at home.'

'Heart up, lad!' cried Barnaby, for I turned faint upon this terrible discovery, and would have fallen but he held me up. 'Patience; our turn will come.'

'Write that letter,' said the merchant again. 'Write that letter quickly, so that it may go with the next vessel. Otherwise the work is hard and the heat is great.' So he turned and left us.

'Courage, man!' said Barnaby. 'To every dog his day. If now for five minutes only I could have my thumb on Mr. Penne's wind-pipe and my fingers round his neck! And I thought to spend the evening joyfully at

Mother Rosemary's! Courage, lad! I have seen already,' he whispered, 'a dozen boats in the bay, any one of which will serve our turn.'

But Robin paid no heed, whatever happened. He stood up when his name was called, and was sold without showing any emotion. When we found that we had been tricked he seemed as if he neither heard nor regarded.

When all was ready we were marched, twenty in number, along a white and dusty road to our estate. By great good fortune—rather by Providence—we were all bought by the same master. He was, it is true, a bad man; but to be bought all together was a happiness which we could not expect. He bought us all because he understood that we belonged to the same family (and that one of position), in the hope of receiving substantial ransom. This man rode with us, accompanied by two overseers (these were themselves under the same sentence) who cracked their whips continually, and cursed us if we lagged. Their

bark was worse, we afterwards found, than their bite, for it was only in the Master's presence that they behaved thus brutishly, and in order to curry favour with him and to prevent being reduced again to the rank of those who served in the field. There was no doubt, from the very outset, that we were afflicted with a master whose like, I would hope, is not to be found upon the island of Barbadoes. Briefly, he was one whose appearance, voice, and manner, all alike proclaimed him openly to all the world as a drunkard, a profligate, and a blasphemer. A drunkard he was of that kind who are seldom wholly drunk and yet are never sober ; who begin the day with a glass, and go on taking more glasses all day long, with small ale for breakfast, strong ale and Madeira for dinner, a tankard in the afternoon, and for supper more strong ale and Madeira, and before bed another tankard. As for compassion, or tenderness, or any of the virtues which a man who holds other men in slavery ought to possess, he had none of them.

Let me speak of him with no more bitter-

ness than is necessary. We have, I think, all forgiven him, and he hath long since gone to a place where he can do no more harm to any, but awaiteth judgment—perhaps in the sure and certain hope of which the Funeral Service speaks—but this is open to doubt.

When we were arrived at the estate, the Master dismounted, gave his horse to a negro, and ordered us to be drawn up in line.

He then made a short speech. He said that he had bought us, rebels and villains as we were, and that he meant to get his money's worth out of us or he would cut us all to pieces. Other things he told us, which I pass over because they were but repetitions of this assurance. He then proceeded to examine us in detail. When he came to me he cursed and swore because he said he had been made to pay for a sound, proper man, and had got a crookback for his bargain. I told him that, with submission, he might find the crookback, who was a physician, a more profitable bargain than many a stronger man.

'What?' he roared. 'Thou art a physi-

cian, eh? Wouldst slink out of the field-work and sit idle among bottles and boluses? John'—he turned to one of the overseers—'pay particular attention, I command thee, to this learned physician. If he so much as turn round in his work, make his shoulders smart.'

'Ay, ay, Sir,' said the overseer.

'And what art thou, sirrah?' He turned next to Barnaby. 'Another learned physician, no doubt—or a Divine, a Bishop likely, or a Dean at the least?'

'As for what I was,' said Barnaby, 'that is neither here nor there. For what I am, I suppose I am your servant for ten years, or until our pardons are sent us.'

'Thou art an impudent dog, I dare swear,' returned the Master. 'I remember, now. Thou wast a Captain in the rebel army, once a sailor. Well, take care, lest thou taste the cat.'

'Gentlemen who are made to taste the cat,' said Barnaby, 'are apt to remember the taste of it when their time is up.'

'What,' he cried. 'You dare to threaten? Take that—and that!' and so began to belabour him about the head. I trembled lest Barnaby should return the blows. But he did not. He only held up his arm to protect his head, and presently, when the master desisted, he shook himself like a dog.

'I promise you I shall remember the taste of that wood,' he said quietly.

The Master looked as if he would renew the cudgelling, but thought better of it.

Then, without more violence, we were assigned our quarters. A cottage or hut was given to us. We were served with a hammock and a rug each; a pannikin, basin, spoon and platter for each; a Monmouth cap; two shirts, common and coarse; two pairs of canvas breeches, and a pair of shoes for each—so that we looked for all the world like the fellows who live by loading and unloading the ships in the port of Bristol. Yet the change after the long voyage was grateful. They served us next with some of the stuff they call loblollie, and then the night fell and we

lay down in our hammocks, which were certainly softer than the planks of the ship, and then fell fast asleep in spite of the humming and the biting of the merrywings, and so slept till the break of day.

CHAPTER XL.

WITH THE HOE.

BEFORE it was daylight we were aroused by the discordant clang of a bell : work was about to begin.

In these latitudes there is little twilight ; the day begins, as it ends, with a kind of suddenness. I arose, being thus summoned, and looked out. Long rays of light were shooting up the sky from the east, and, though the stars were still visible, the day was fast breaking. In a few moments it became already so light that I could see across the yard—or what the Italians would call the piazza—with its ragged bonannow-leaves, the figures of our fellow-slaves moving about the huts, and hear their voices. Alas! sad and melancholy are the voices of those who work upon his Majesty's

Plantations. Two old negresses went about among the new-comers carrying a bucketfull of their yellow mess, which they distributed among us, and giving us to understand that this bowl of yellow porridge, or loblollie, made out of Indian corn, was all we should have before dinner. They also gave us to understand in their broken English, which is far worse than the jargon talked by some of our country people, that we should have to prepare our own meals for the future, and that they would show us how to make this delectable mess.

'Eat it,' said Barnaby; 'a pig is better fed at home. Eat it, Robin, lest thou faint in the sun. Perhaps there will be something better for dinner. Heigho! only to think of Mother Rosemary's, where I thought to lie last night! Patience, lads!'

One would not seem to dwell too long on the simple fare of convicts: therefore I will say, once for all, that our rations consisted of nothing at all but the Indian meal and of salt beef or salt fish. The old hands and the

negro slaves know how to improve their fare in many ways, and humane masters will give their servants quantities of the fruits such as grow here in great abundance—as plantains, lemons, lymes, bonannows, guavas, and the like. And many of the black slaves have small gardens behind their huts, where they grow onions, yams, potatoes, and other things which they cultivate on Sundays. They are all great thieves also, stealing, whenever they can, poultry, eggs, and fruit, so that they grow fat and sleek, while the white servants daily grow more meagre, and fall into diseases by reason of the poorness of their food. Then, as to drink, there are many kinds of drink (apart from the wines of Spain, Portugal, Canary, Madeira, and France) made in the country itself, such as mobbie, which is a fermented liquor of potatoes ; and perino, from the liquor of chewed cassavy root ; punch, which is water and sugar left to work for ten days ; rum, which is distilled in every Ingenio, and is a spirit as strong as brandy, and said to be more wholesome. Those who

have been long in the island, even the servants, though without a penny, know how and where to get these drinks; and since there is no consoler, to the common sort, so good as strong drink, those who are able to drink every day of these things become somewhat reconciled to their lot.

'Come out, ye dogs of rebels and traitors!' It was the loud and harsh voice of the Master himself, who thus disturbed us at our breakfast. 'Twas his custom thus to rise early, and to witness the beginning of the day's work. And 'twas his kindly nature which impelled him thus to welcome and encourage his newly-bought slaves. 'Come out, I say! Ye shall now show of what stuff ye are made. Instead of pulling down your lawful King, ye shall pull up your lawful master and make him rich. If ye never did a day's work in your lives, ye shall now learn the how by the must. Come forth, I say, ye lazy, guzzling skulkers!'

'Ay, ay,' said Barnaby, leisurely scraping his bowl, 'we are like, indeed, to be overfed

here.' He rolled sailor fashion out of the hut.

'Barnaby,' I said, 'for God's sake say nothing to anger the Master! There is no help but in patience and in hope.'

So we, too, went forth. The Master, red-faced as he was, looked as if he had been drinking already.

'So,' he cried, 'here is the learned physician. Your health, Doctor. And here is the gallant Captain, who was once a sailor. The air of the fields, Captain, will remind you, perchance, of the quarter-deck. This young gentleman looks so gallant and gay that I warrant he will ply the hoe with a light and frolick heart. Your healths, gentlemen. Hark ye, now. You are come of a good stock, I hear. Therefore have I bought you at a great price, looking to get my money back and more. Some planters would suffer you to lie at your ease cockered up with bonavist and Madeira till the money comes. As for me, I shall now show you what you will continue to do, unless the money comes.

Therefore you will at once, I doubt not, ask for paper and pen and presently write. Sixty pounds a-piece, gentlemen—not one penny less—will purchase your freedom. Till then, the fields. And no difference between white and black ; but one whip for both.'

We made no reply, but took the hoes which were given out to us and marched with the rest of the melancholy troop.

There were as many blacks as whites. We were divided into gangs; with every gang a driver armed with a whip; and over all the overseers, who, by their severity, showed their zeal for the Master. The condition of slavery hath in it something devilish, both for those who are slaves and those who are masters. The former it drives into despair, and fills with cunning, dishonesty, treachery, and revenge. Why, the black slaves have been known to rise in rebellion, and while they had the power have inflicted tortures unheard-of upon their masters. The latter it makes cruel and unfeeling ; it tempts them continually to sins of all kinds ; it puts into their

power the lives, the bodies—nay, the very souls—of the poor folk whom they buy. I do maintain, and conceal not my opinion, that no man ought, in a Christian country, to be a slave except for a term of years, and then for punishment. I have been myself a slave, and I know the misery and the injustice of the condition. But it is idle to hope that the planters will abandon this means of cultivating their estates, and it is certain that in hot countries no man will work except by compulsion.

The whip carried by the driver is a dreadful instrument, long, thick, and strongly plaited, with a short handle. It is coiled and slung round the shoulders when it is not being used to terrify or to punish, and I know well that its loud crack produces upon the mind a sensation of fear and of horror such as the thunder of artillery or the sight of the enemy charging could never cause even to a coward. The fellows are also extremely dextrous in the use of it; they can inflict a punishment not worse than the flogging of a

schoolboy; or, with no greater outward show of strength, they will cut and gash the flesh like a Russian executioner with the cruel instrument which they call the knout.

For slight offences, such as laziness or carelessness in the field, the former is administered; but for serious offences, the latter. One sad execution (I cannot call it less) I myself witnessed. What the poor wretch had done I know not, but I can never forget his piercing shrieks as the whip cut into the bleeding flesh. This is not punishment: it is savage and revengeful cruelty. Yet the Master and the overseers looked on with callous eyes.

They marched us to a field about half a mile from our village or camp, and there, drawing us up in line, set us to work. Our task was with the hoe, to dig out square holes, each of the same depth and size, in which the sugar canes are planted, a small piece of old cane being laid in each. These holes are cut with regularity and exactness, in long lines and equally distant from each other. It is

the driver's business to keep all at work at the same rate of progress, so that no one should lag behind, no one should stop to rest or breathe, no one should do less than his neighbours. The poor wretches, with bent bodies streaming with their exertions, speedily become afflicted with a burning thirst; their legs tremble; their backs grow stiff and ache; their whole bodies become full of pain; and yet they may not rest nor stand upright to breathe a while, nor stop to drink, until the driver calls a halt. From time to time the negroes—men and women alike—were dragged out of the ranks and laid on the ground, three or four at a time, to receive lashes for not making the holes deep enough or fast enough. At home, one can daily see the poor creatures flogged in Bridewell; every day there are rogues tied to the cart-wheel and flogged well-nigh to death; but a ploughman is not flogged for the badness of his furrow, nor is a cobbler flogged because he maketh his shoon ill. And our men do not shriek and scream so wildly as the negroes, who are an ignorant

people and have never learned the least self-restraint. It was horrid also to see how their bodies were scarred with the marks of old floggings, and branded with letters to show by whom they had been bought. As for our poor fellows, who had been brave recruits in Monmouth's army, they trembled at the sight and worked all the harder; yet some of them with the tears in their eyes, to think that they should be brought to such a dismal fate and to herd with these poor, ignorant, black people.

'Twas the design of the Master to set us to the very hardest work from the beginning, so that we should be the more anxious to get remission of our pains. For it must not be supposed that all the work on the estate was so hard and irksome as that with the hoe—which is generally kept for the strongest and hardest of the negroes, men and women. There are many other employments: some are put to weed the canes, some to fell wood, some to cleave it, some to attend the Ingenio, the boiling-house, the still-house, the curing-

house ; some to cut the maize, some to gather provisions, of bonavist, maize, yams, potatoes, cassavy, and the like. Some to the smith's forge ; some to attend to the oxen and sheep ; some to the camels and assinegoes, and the like : so that had the Master pleased he might have set us to work better fitted to English gentlemen. Well, his greediness and cruelty were defeated, as you shall presently see. As for the domestic economy of the estate, there were on it five hundred acres of land, of which two hundred were planted with sugar, eighty for pasture, one hundred and twenty for wood, thirty for tobacco, five for ginger, and as many for cotton wool, and seventy for provisions—viz., corn, potatoes, plantains, cassavy, and bonavist—with a few for fruit. There were ninety-six negroes, two or three Indian women with their children, and twenty-eight Christian servants, of whom we were three.

At eleven o'clock we were marched back to dinner. At one we went out again, the sun being at this time of the day very fierce, though January is the coldest month in the

year. We worked till six o'clock in the evening, when we returned.

'This,' said Robin, with a groan, 'is what we have now to do every day for ten years.'

'Heart up, lads!' said Barnaby; 'our time will come. Give me time to turn round, as a body may say. Why, the harbour is full of boats. Let me get to the port and look round a bit. If we had any money now—but that is past praying for. Courage and patience! Doctor, you hoe too fast: no one looks for zeal. Follow the example of the black fellows, who think all day long how they shall get off with as little work as possible. As for their lash, I doubt whether they dare to lay it about us, though they may talk. Because you see, even if we do not escape, we shall some time or other, through the Rector's efforts, get a pardon, and then we are gentlemen again; and when that moment arrives, I will make this master of ours fight, willy-nilly, and I will kill him, d'ye see, before I go home to kill Benjamin.'

He then went on to discourse (either with

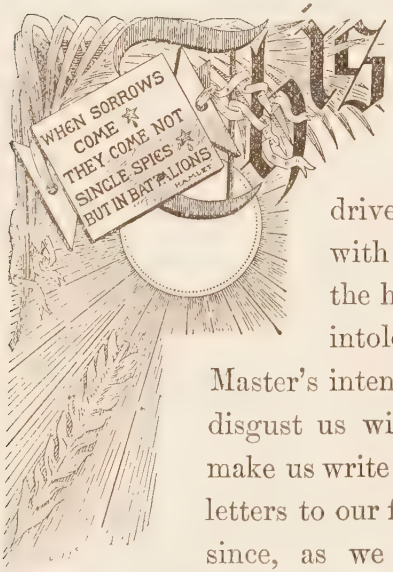
the hope of raising our spirits or because it cheered his mind just to set them forth) upon his plans for the means of escape.

'A boat,' he said, 'I can seize. There are many which would serve our purpose. But a boat without victuals would be of little use. One would not be accused of stealing, yet we may have to break into the store and take therefrom some beef or biscuit. But where to store our victuals? We may have a voyage of three or four hundred knots before us. That is nothing for a tight little boat when the hurricane season is over. We have no compass either—I must lay hands upon a compass. The first Saturday night I will make for the port and cast about. Lift up your head, Robin. Why, man, all bad times pass if only one hath patience.'

It was this very working in the fields, by which the Master thought to drive us into despair, which caused in the long run our deliverance, and that in the most unexpected manner.

CHAPTER XLI.

ON CONDITIONS.



SERVITUDE endured for a week, during which we were driven forth daily with the negroes to the hardest and most intolerable toil, the Master's intention being so to disgust us with the life as to make us write the most urgent letters to our friends at home; since, as we told him, two hundred guineas had been already paid on our account (though none of the money was used for the purpose), he supposed that another two

hundred could easily be raised. Wherefore, while those of the new servants who were common country lads were placed in the Ingenio, or the curing-house, where the work is sheltered from the scorching sun, we were made to endure every hardship that the place permitted. In the event, however, the man's greed was disappointed and his cruelty made of none avail.

In fact, the thing I had foreseen quickly came to pass. When a man lies in a lethargy of despair, his body, no longer fortified by a cheerful mind, presently falls into any disease which is lurking in the air. Diseases of all kinds may be likened unto wild beasts: invisible, always on the prowl, seeking whom they may devour. The young fall victims to some, the weak to others; the drunkards and gluttons to others; the old to others; and the lethargic, again, to others. It was not surprising to me, therefore, when Robin, coming home one evening, fell to shivering and shaking, chattering with his teeth, and showing every external sign of cold, though the evening was still warm, and the

sun had that day been more than commonly hot. Also, he turned away from his food, and would eat nothing. Therefore, as there was nothing we could give him, we covered him with our rugs; and he presently fell asleep. But in the morning, when we awoke, behold! Robin was in a high fever: his hands and head burning hot, his cheek flushed red, his eyes rolling, and his brain wandering. I went forth and called the overseer to come and look at him. At first he cursed and swore, saying that the man was malingering (that is to say, pretending to be sick, in order to avoid work); that, if he was a negro instead of a gentleman, a few cuts with his lash should shortly bring him to his senses; that, for his part, he liked not this mixing of gentlemen with negroes; and that, finally, I must go and bring forth my sick man or take it upon myself to face the Master, who would probably drive him afield with the stick.

'Sir,' I said, 'what the Master may do I know not. Murder may be done by any who are wicked enough. For my part, I am a

physician, and I tell you that to make this man go forth to work will be murder. But indeed he is lightheaded, and with a thousand lashes you could not make him understand or obey.'

Well, he grumbled, but he followed me into the hut.

'The man hath had a sunstroke,' he said. 'I wonder that any of you have escaped. Well, we can carry him to the sick-house, where he will die. When a new hand is taken this way he always dies.'

'Perhaps he will not die,' I said, 'if he is properly treated. If he is given nothing but this diet of loblollie and salt beef, and nothing to drink but the foul water of the pond, and no other doctor than an ignorant old negress, he will surely die.'

'Good Lord, man!' said the fellow. 'What do you expect in this country? It is the Master's loss, not mine. Carry him between you to the sick-house.'

So we carried Robin to the sick-house.

At home we should account it a barn, be-

ing a great place with a thatched roof, the windows open without shutter or lattice, the door breaking away from its hinges. Within there was a black lying on a pallet, groaning most piteously. The poor wretch for something that he had done, I know not what, had his flesh cut to pieces with the whip. With him was an old negress mumbling and mouthing.

We laid Robin on another pallet, and covered him with a rug.

'Now, man,' said the overseer, 'leave him there, and come forth to your work.'

'Nay,' I said, 'he must not be left. I am a physician, and I must stay beside him.'

'If he were your son I would not suffer you to stay with him.'

'Man!' I cried. 'Hast thou no pity?'

'Pity!' The fellow grinned. 'Pity! quotha. Pity! Is this a place for pity! Why, if I showed any pity I should be working beside you in the fields. It is because I have no pity that I am overseer. Look here' —he showed me his left hand, which had been branded with a red-hot iron. 'This was

done in Newgate seven years ago and more. Three years more I have to serve. That done, I may begin to show some pity. Not before. Pity is scarce among the drivers of Barbadoes. As well ask the beadle for pity when he flogs a 'prentice.

'Let me go to the Master, then.'

'Best not; best not. Let this man die and keep yourself alive. The morning is the worst time for him, because last night's drink is still in his head. Likely as not you will but make the sick man's case and your own worse. Leave him in the sick-house, and go back to him in the evening.

The man spoke with some compassion in his eyes. Just then, however, a negro boy came running from the house and spoke to the overseer.

'Why,' he said, 'nothing could be more pat. You can speak to the Master, if you please. He is in pain, and Madam sends for Dr. Humphrey Challis. Go, Doctor. If you cure him you will be a lucky man. If you cannot cure him the Lord have mercy upon

you ! Whereas, if you suffer him to die,' he added with a grin and a whisper, 'every man on the estate will fall down and worship you. Let him die ! Let him die !'

I followed the boy, who took me to that part of the house which fronts the west and north. It was a mean house of wood, low and small considering how wealthy a man was the master of it ; on three sides, however, there was built out a kind of *loggia*, as the Italians call it, of wood instead of marble, forming a cloister or open chamber, outside the house. They call it a verandah, and part of it they hang with mats made of grass, so as to keep it shaded in the afternoon and evening, when the sun is in the west. The boy brought me to this place, pointed to a chair where the Master sat, and then ran away as quickly as he could.

It was easy to understand why he ran away, because the Master at this moment sprang out of his chair and began to stamp up and down the verandah roaring and cursing. He was clad in a white linen dressing-gown and linen nightcap. On a small table beside

him stood a bottle of beer, newly opened, and a silver tankard.

When he saw me he began to swear at me for my delay in coming, though I had not lost a moment.

'Sir,' I said, 'if you will cease railing and blaspheming I will examine into your malady. Otherwise I will do nothing for you.'

'What?' he cried. 'You dare to make conditions with me, you dog, you!'

'Fair words,' I said. 'Fair words. I am your servant to work on your plantation as you may command. I am not your physician and I promise you, Sir, upon the honour of a gentleman, and without using the Sacred Name which is so often on your lips, that if you continue to rail at me I will suffer you to die rather than stir a little finger in your help.'

'Suffer the physician to examine the place,' said a woman's voice. 'What good is it to curse and to swear?'

The voice came from a hammock swinging at the end of the verandah. It was made, I

observed, of a kind of coarse grass loosely woven.

The man sat down and sulkily bade me find a remedy for the pain which he was enduring. So I consented and examined his upper jaw, where I soon found out the cause of his pain in a good-sized tumour formed over the fangs of a grinder. Such a thing causes agony even to a person of cool blood, but to a man whose veins are inflamed with strong drink, the pain of it is maddening.

'You have got a tumour,' I told him. 'It has been forming for some days. It has now nearly, or quite, reached its head. It began about the time when you were cursing and insulting certain unfortunate gentlemen, who are for the time under your power. Take it, therefore, as a Divine judgment upon you for your cruelty and insolence.'

He glared at me but said nothing, the hope of relief causing him to receive this admonition with patience, if not in good part. Besides, my finger was still upon the spot, and if I so much as pressed gently I could

cause him agony unspeakable. Truly, the power of the physician is great.

'The pain,' I told him, 'is already grown almost intolerable. But it will be much greater in a few hours unless something is done. It is now like unto a little ball of red-hot fire in your jaw; in an hour or two it will seem as if the whole of your face was a burning fiery furnace; your cheek will swell out until your left eye is closed; your tortures, which now make you bawl, will then make you scream; you now walk about and stamp; you will then lie down on your back and kick. No negro slave ever suffered half so much under your accursed lash as you will suffer under this tumour—unless something is done.'

'Doctor,' it was again the woman's voice from the hammock, 'you have frightened him enough.'

'Strong drink,' I went on, pointing to the tankard, 'will only make you worse. It inflames your blood and adds fuel to the raging fire. Unless something is done the pain will

be followed by delirium ; that by fever, and the fever by death. Sir, are you prepared for death ? '

He turned horribly pale and gasped.

'Do something for me!' he said. 'Do something for me, and that without more words!'

'Nay ; but I will first make a bargain with you. There is in the sick-house a gentleman, my cousin—Robin Challis by name —one of the newly-arrived rebels, and your servant. He is lying sick unto death of a sunstroke and fever caused by your hellish cruelty in sending him out to work on the fields with the negroes instead of putting him to light labour in the Ingenio or elsewhere. I say, his sickness is caused by your barbarity. Wherefore I will do nothing for you at all—do you hear? Nothing! nothing! —unless I am set free to do all I can for him. Yea ; and I must have such cordials and generous diet as the place can afford, otherwise I will not stir a finger to help you. Otherwise — endure the torments of the damned ; rave in madness and in fever. Die

and go to your own place. I will not help you. So ; that is my last word.'

Upon this I really thought the man had gone stark, staring mad. For, at the impudence of a mere servant (though a gentleman of far better family than his own) daring to make conditions with him, he became purple in the cheeks, and, seizing his great stick which lay on the table, he began belabouring me with all his might about the head and shoulders. But I caught up a chair and used it for a shield, while he capered about, striking wildly and swearing most horribly.

At this moment the lady who was in the hammock stepped out of it and walked towards us slowly, like a Queen. She was without any doubt the most beautiful woman I had ever seen. She was dressed in a kind of dressing-gown of flowered silk, which covered her from head to foot ; her head was adorned with the most lovely glossy black ringlets ; a heavy gold chain lay round her neck, and a chain of gold with pearls was twined in her hair, so that it looked like

a coronet; her fingers were covered with rings, and gold bracelets hung upon her bare white arms. Her figure was tall and full; her face inclined to the Spanish, being full and yet regular, with large black eyes. Though I was fighting with a madman, I could not resist the wish that I could paint her, and I plainly perceived that she was one of that race which is called Quadroon, being most likely the daughter of a mulatto woman and a white father. This was evident by the character of her skin, which had in it what the Italians call the *morbidezza*, and by a certain dark hue under the eyes.

'Why,' she said, speaking to the Master as if he had been a petulant school-boy, 'you only make yourself worse by all this fury. Sit down, and lay aside your stick. And you, Sir'—she addressed herself to me—'you may be a great physician, and at home a gentleman; but here you are a servant, and therefore bound to help your Master in all you can without first making conditions.'

'I know too well,' I replied. 'He bought

me as his servant, but not as his physician. I will not heal him without my fee; and my fee is that my sick cousin be attended to with humanity.'

'Take him away!' cried the Master, beside himself with rage. 'Clap him in the stocks! Let him sit there all day long in the sun! He shall have nothing to eat or to drink! In the evening he shall be flogged! If it was the Duke of Monmouth himself, he should be tied up and flogged! Where the devil are the servants?'

A great hulking negro came running.

'You have now,' I told him quietly, 'permitted yourself to be inflamed with violent rage. The pain will therefore more rapidly increase. When it becomes intolerable, you will be glad to send for me.'

The negro dragged me away (but I made no resistance), and led me to the courtyard, where stood the stocks and a whipping-post. He pointed to the latter with a horrid grin, and then laid me fast in the former. Fortunately, he left me my hat, otherwise the hot

sun would have made an end of me. I was, however, quite easy in my mind. I knew that this poor wretch, who already suffered so horribly, would before long feel in that jaw of his, as it were, a ball of fire. He would drink, in order to deaden the pain; but the wine would only make the agony more horrible. Then he would be forced to send for me.

This, in fact, was exactly what he did.

I sat in those abominable stocks for no more than an hour. Then Madam herself came to me, followed by the negro fellow who had locked my heels in those two holes.

'He is now much worse,' she said. 'He is now in pain that cannot be endured. Canst thou truly relieve his suffering?'

'Certainly I can. But on conditions. My cousin will die if he is neglected. Suffer me to minister to his needs. Give him what I want for him and I will cure your'—I did not know whether I might say 'your husband,' so I changed the words into—'my Master. After that I will cheerfully endure again his accursed cruelty of the fields.'

She bade the negro unlock the bar.

'Come,' she said. 'Let us hear no more about any bargains. I will see to it that you are able to attend to your cousin. Nay, there is an unfortunate young gentlewoman here, a rebel, and a servant like yourself—for the last week she doth nothing but weep for the misfortunes of her friends—meaning you and your company. I will ask her to nurse the sick man. She will desire nothing better, being a most tender-hearted woman. And as for you, it will be easy for you to look after your cousin and your Master at the same time.'

'Then, Madam,' I replied, 'take me to him, and I will speedily do all I can to relieve him.'

I found my patient in a condition of mind and body most dangerous. I wondered that he had not already fallen into a fit, so great was his wrath and so dreadful his pain. He rolled his eyes; his cheeks were purple; he clenched his fists; he would have gnashed his teeth but for the pain in his jaws.

'Make yourself easy,' said Madam. 'This learned physician will cause your pain to cease. I have talked with him and put him into a better mind.'

The Master shook his head as much as to say that a better mind would hardly be arrived at without the assistance of the whipping-post; but the emergency of the case prevented that indulgence. Briefly, therefore, I took out my lancet and pierced the place, which instantly relieved the pain. Then I placed him in bed, bled him copiously, and forbade his taking anything stronger than small-beer. Freedom from pain and exhaustion presently caused him to fall into a deep and tranquil sleep. After all this was done I was anxious to see Robin.

'Madam,' I said, 'I have now done all I can. He will awake at noon, I dare say. Give him a little broth, but not much. There is danger of fever. You had better call me again when he awakes. Warn him solemnly that rage, revenge, cursing, and beating must be all postponed until such time as he is

stronger. I go to visit my cousin in the sick-house where I await your commands.'

'Sir,' she said courteously, 'I cannot sufficiently thank your skill and zeal. You will find the nurse of whom I spoke in the sick-house with your cousin. She took with her some cordial, and will tell me what else you order for your patient. I hope your cousin may recover. But, indeed'——she stopped and sighed.

'You would say, Madam, that it would be better for him and for us all to die. Perhaps so. But we must not choose to die, but rather strive to live as more in accordance with the Word of God.'

'The white servants have been hitherto the common rogues and thieves and sweepings of your English streets,' she said. 'Sturdy rogues are they all, who fear naught but the lash, and have nothing of tenderness left but tender skins. They rob and steal; they will not work, save by compulsion; they are far worse than the negroes for laziness and drunkenness. I know not why they are sent

out, or why the planters buy them, when the blacks do so much better serve their turn, and they can without reproach beat and flog the negroes, while to flog and beat the whites is by some accounted cruel.'

'All this, Madam, is doubtless true ; but my friends are not the sweepings of the street.'

'No, but you are treated as if you were. It is a new thing having gentlemen among the servants, and the planters are not yet accustomed to them. They are a masterful and a wilful folk, the planters of Barbadoes ; from childhood upwards they have their own way, and brook not opposition. You have seen into what a madness of wrath you threw the Master by your opposition. Believe me, Sir, the place is not wholesome for you and for your friends. The Master looks to get a profit not from your labour, but by your ransom. Sir'—she looked me very earnestly in the face—'if you have friends at home—if you have any friends at all—entreat them—command them—immediately to send money for your ransom. It will not cost them much.

If you do not get the money you will most assuredly die, with the life that you will have to live. All the white servants die except the very strongest and lustiest. Whether they work in the fields, or in the garden, or in the Ingenio, or in the stables, they die. They cannot endure the hot sun and the hard fare. They presently catch fever, or a calenture, or a cramp, and so they die. This young gentlewoman who is now with your cousin will presently fall into melancholy and die. There is no help for her, or for you—believe me, Sir—there is no hope but to get your freedom.' She broke off here, and never at any other time spoke to me again upon this subject.

In three weeks' time, indeed, we were to regain our freedom, but not in the way Madam imagined.

Before I go on to tell of the wonderful surprise which awaited me I must say that there was, after this day, no more any question about the field-work for me. In this island, then, there was a great scarcity of physicians; nay, there were none properly qualified to call

themselves physicians, though a few quacks; the sick servants on the estates were attended by the negresses, some of whom have, I confess, a wonderful knowledge of herbs—in which respect they may be likened to our countrywomen, who, for fevers, agues, toothache, and the like, are as good as any physicians in the world. It was, therefore, speedily rumoured abroad that there was a physician upon my Master's estate, whereupon there was immediately a great demand for his services; and henceforth I went daily, with the Master's consent, to visit the sick people on the neighbouring estates—nay, I was even called upon by his Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor himself, Mr. Steed, for a complaint from which he suffered. And I not only gave advice and medicines, but I also received a fee just as if I had been practising in London. But the fees went to my Master, who took them all, and offered me no better diet than before. That, however, mattered little, because wherever I went I asked for, and always received, food of a more generous kind and a glass or two of

wine, so that I fared well and kept my health during the short time that we remained upon the island. I had also to thank Madam for many a glass of Madeira, dish of cocoa, plate of fruit, and other things not only for my patient Robin, but also for myself, and for another, of whom I have now to speak.

When, therefore, the Master was at length free from pain and in a comfortable sleep, I left him, with Madam's permission, and sought the sick-house in a most melancholy mood, because I believed that Robin would surely die whatever I should do. And I confess that, having had but little experience of sunstroke and the kind of fever which followeth upon it, and having no books to consult and no medicine at hand, I knew not what I could do for him. And the boasted skill of the physician, one must confess, availeth little against a disease which hath once laid hold upon a man. 'Tis better for him so to order the lives of his patients while they are well as to prevent disease, just as those who dwell beside an unruly river (as I have seen

upon the great river Rhone) build up a high levée, or bank, over which it cannot pass.

In the sick-house the floor was of earth without boards ; there was no other furniture but two or three wooden beds, on each a coarse mattress with a rug ; and all was horribly filthy, unwashed, and foul. Beside the pallet where Robin lay there knelt, praying, a woman with her head in her hands. Heavens! there was, then, in this dark and heathenish place one woman who still remembered her Maker!

Robin was awake. His restless eyes rolled about ; his hands clutched uneasily at his blanket ; and he was talking. Alas! the poor brain, disordered and wandering, carried him back to the old village. He was at home again in imagination, though we were so far away. Yea ; he had crossed the broad Atlantic, and was in fair Somerset, among the orchards and the hills. And only to hear him talk, the tears rolled down my cheeks.

'Alice,' he said. Alas! he thought that he was again with the sweet companion of

his youth. 'Alice; the nuts are ripe in the woods. We will to-morrow take a basket and go gather them. Benjamin shall not come to spoil sport. Besides, he would want to eat them all himself. Humphrey shall come, and you, and I. That will be enough.'

Then his thoughts changed again. 'Oh! my dear,' he said—in a moment he had passed over ten years, and was now with his mistress, a child no longer. 'My dear, thou hast so sweet a face. Nowhere in the whole world is there so sweet a face. I have always loved thy face; not a day but it has been in my mind—always my love, my sweetheart, my soul, my life. My dear, we will never leave the country: we want no grandeur of rank, and state, and town, we will always continue here. Old age shall find us lovers still. Death cannot part us, oh! my dear, save for a little while—and then sweet Heaven will unite us again to love each other for ever, and for ever'——

'Oh! Robin! Robin! Robin!'

I knew that voice. Oh! Heavens! was I

dreaming? Was I, too, wandering? Were we all back in Somerset?

For the voice was none other than the voice of Alice herself!

CHAPTER XLII.

ALICE.

'ALICE!' I cried.

She rose from her knees and turned to meet me. Her face was pale: her eyes were heavy and they were full of tears.

'Alice!'

'I saw you when you came here, a week ago,' she said. 'Oh! Humphrey, I saw you, and I was ashamed to let you know that I was here.'

'Ashamed? My dear, ashamed? But how—why—what dost thou here?'

'How could I meet Robin's eyes after what I had done?'

'It was done for him, and for his mother, and for all of us. Poor child, there is no reason to be ashamed.'

'And now I meet him, and he is in a fever, and his mind wanders; he knows me not.'

'He is sorely stricken, Alice; I know not how the disease may end, mind and body are sick alike. For the mind I can do nothing; for the body I can do but little: yet with cleanliness and good food we may help him to mend. But tell me, Child, in the name of Heaven, how camest thou in this place?'

But before anything she would attend to the sick man. And presently she brought half-a-dozen negresses, who cleaned and swept the place, and sheets were fetched and a linen shirt, in which we dressed our patient, with such other things as we could devise for his comfort. Then I bathed his head with cold water, continually changing his bandages so as to keep him cool; and I took some blood from him, but not much, because he was greatly reduced by bad food and hard work.

When he was a little easier we talked. But Heavens! to think of the villainy which

had worked its will upon this poor child ! As if it was not enough that she should be forced to fly from a man who had so strangely betrayed her, and as if it was not enough that she should be robbed of all her money—but she must also be put on board, falsely and treacherously, as one, like ourselves, sentenced to ten years' servitude on the Plantations ! For, indeed, I knew and was quite certain that none of the Maids of Taunton were thus sent abroad. It was notorious, before we were sent away, that, with the exception of Susan Blake, who died of jail fever at Dorchester, all the Maids were given to the Queen's ladies, and by them suffered to go free on the payment by their parents of thirty or forty pounds apiece. And as for Alice, she was a stranger in the place, and it was not known that she had joined that unfortunate procession. So that if ever a man was kidnapper and villain, that man was George Penne.

It behoves a physician to keep his mind under all circumstances calm and composed.

He must not suffer himself to be carried away by passion, by rage, hatred, or even anxiety. Yet, I confess that my mind was clean distracted by the discovery that Alice herself was with us, a prisoner like ourselves ; I was, I say, distracted, nor could I tell what to think of this event and its consequences. For, to begin with, the poor child was near those who would protect her. But what kind of protection could be given by such helpless slaves ? Then was she beyond her husband's reach ; he would not, it was quite certain, get possession of her at this vast distance. So far she was safe. But then the Master, who looked to make a profit by her, as he looked to make a profit by us—through the ransom of her friends ! She had no friends to ransom her. There was but one, the Rector, and he was her husband's father. The time would come when the avarice of the Master would make him do or threaten something barbarous towards her. Then she had found favour with Madam, this beautiful mulatto woman, whom Alice innocently supposed to be the Master's wife.

And there was the young planter, who wished to buy her with the honourable intention of marrying her. In short, I knew not what to think or to say, because at one moment it seemed as if it was the most Providential thing in the world that Alice should have been brought here, and the next moment it seemed as if her presence only magnified our evils.

'Nay,' she said, when I opened my mind to her, 'seeing that the world is so large, what but a special ruling of Providence could have brought us all to this same island, out of the whole multitude of isles—and then again to this same estate out of so many? Humphrey, your faith was wont to be stronger. I believe—nay, I am quite sure—that it was for the strengthening and help of all alike that this hath been ordained. First, it enables me to nurse my poor Robin—mine, alas! no longer! Yet must I still love him as long as I have a heart to beat.'

'Love him always, Child,' I said. 'This is no sin to love the companion of thy child-

hood, thy sweetheart, from whom thou wast torn by the most wicked treachery'—but could say no more, because the contemplation of that sweet face, now so mournful, yet so patient, made my voice to choke and my eyes to fill with tears. Said I not that a physician must still keep his mind free from all emotion ?

All that day I conversed with her. We agreed that for the present she should neither acknowledge nor conceal the truth from Madam, upon whose good-will was now placed all our hopes. That is to say, if Madam questioned her she was to acknowledge that we were her former friends ; but if Madam neither suspected anything nor asked her anything, she should keep the matter to herself. She told me during this day all that had happened unto her since I saw her last, when we marched out of Taunton. Among other things I heard of the woman called Deb, who was now working in the cane-fields (she was one of a company whose duty it was to weed the canes). In the evening this woman, when

the people returned, came to the sick-house. She was a great strapping woman, stronger than most men. She was dressed, like all the women on the estate, in a smock and petticoat, with a thick coif to keep off the sun, and a pair of strong shoes.

She came to help her mistress, as she fondly called Alice. She wanted to sit up and watch the sick man, so that her mistress might go to sleep. But Alice refused. Then this faithful creature rolled herself up in her rug and laid herself at the door, so that no one should go in or out without stepping over her. And so she fell asleep.

Then we began our night watch, and talked in whispers, sitting by the bedside of the fevered man. Presently I forgot the wretchedness of our condition, the place where we were, our hopeless, helpless lot, our anxieties and our fears, in the joy and happiness of once more conversing with my Mistress. She spoke to me after the manner of the old days, but with more seriousness, about the marvellous workings of the Lord among His

people ; and presently we began to talk of the music which we loved to play, and how the sweet concord and harmony of the notes lifts up the soul ; and of pictures and painting, and Mr. Boscorel's drawings and my own poor attempts, and my studies in the schools, and so forth, as if my life was, indeed, but just beginning, and, instead of the Monmouth cap, and the canvas breeches, and common shirt, I was once more arrayed in velvet, with a physician's wig and a gold-headed cane.

Lastly she prayed, entreating merciful Heaven to bestow health of mind and enlargement of body to the sick man upon the bed, and her brother, and her dear friend (meaning myself), and to all poor sufferers for religion ; and she asked that, as it had been permitted that she should be taken from her earthly lover by treachery, so it might now be granted to her to lay down her life for his, so that he might go free and she die in his place.

Through the open window I saw the four stars which make the constellation they call the 'Crucero,' being like a cross fixed in the

heavens. The night was still, and there was no sound save the shrill noise of the cigala, which is here as shrill as in Padua. Slave and master, bondman and free, were all asleep save in this house, where Robin rolled his heavy head, and murmured without ceasing, and Alice communed with her God. Surely, surely, I thought, here was no room for doubt! This my Mistress had been brought here by the hand of God Himself, to be as an angel or messenger of His own, for our help and succour—haply for our spiritual help alone, seeing that no longer was there any help from man.

CHAPTER XLIII.

BARNABY HEARS THE NEWS.

THE Master, my patient, got up from his bed in a few days, somewhat pale and weak after his copious blood-letting and the drastic medicines with which I purged the grossness of his habit and expelled the noxious humours caused by his many intemperances. These had greatly injured what we call—because we know not what it is nor what else to call it—the pure volatile spirit, and, so to speak, turned sour the *humor radicalis*—the sweet oil and balsamical virtues of the body. I gave him such counsel as was fitting for his case, admonishing him urgently to abstain from strong liquors, except in their moderate use; to drink only after his meals; to keep his head cool and sober, and above all

things to repress and govern his raging temper, which would otherwise most certainly catch him by the throat like some fierce and invisible devil and throw him into a fit, and so kill him. I told him also what might be meant by the Wise Man (who certainly thought of all the bearings which his words could have) when he said that one who is slow to wrath is of great understanding—namely, that many men do throw away their lives by falling into excessive fits of rage. But I found that the words of Holy Scripture had little authority over him, for he lived without prayer or praise, trampled on the laws of God, and gave no heed at all to the flight of time and the coming of the next world.

For a day or two he followed my injunctions, taking a tankard of small ale to his breakfast, the same quantity with his dinner, a pint of Madeira for his supper, and a sober glass or two before going to bed. But when he grew well, his brother planters came round him again, the drinking was renewed, and in the morning I would find him again with parched

throat, tongue dry, and shaking hand, ready to belabour, to curse, and to rail at everybody. If one wanted an example for the young how strong drink biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder, here was a case the sight of which might have caused all young men to forswear drunkenness. Alas ! there are plenty of such examples to be seen in every part of England ; yet the younger men still continue to drink, and that, I think, worse than their fathers. This man, however, who was not yet five-and-thirty, in the very prime of strong and healthy manhood, had his finger joints swollen and stony from taking much wine ; he commonly ate but little meat, craving continually for more drink, and his understanding, which was by nature, I doubt not, clear and strong, was now brutish and stupid. Thinking over this man, and of the power, even unto death, which he possessed over his servants and slaves, the words came into my mind : ' It is not for Kings, O Lemuel, it is not for Kings to drink wine ; nor for Princes strong drink.'

Nay, more (and this I say, knowing that many godly men will not agree with me) : I am fully persuaded that there is no man in the whole world so good and so strong in virtue and religion that he should be suffered to become the master or despot over any other man, even over a company of poor and ignorant blacks, or a gang of transported thieves. When I think of those unhappy people, driven forth in the morning, heavy-eyed and downcast, to the hard day's work ; and when I remember how they crept home at night, after being driven, cursed, and beaten all day long ; and when I think upon their drivers, overseers, and masters, and of their hard and callous hearts, I am moved to cry aloud (if any would hear me) that to be a slave is wretched indeed ; but that to own and to drive slaves should be a thing most dangerous for any who would continue a member of Christ's Church.

When I told Barnaby the surprising news that his sister was not only safe, but was a servant like ourselves upon the same estate, I

looked that he would rejoice. On the contrary, he fell into a strange mood, swearing at this ill stroke as he called it. He said that he never had the least doubt as to her safety, seeing there were so many in the West Country who knew and respected her father, and would willingly shelter her. Then he dwelt upon certain evils—of which, I confess, I had thought little—which might befall her. And, lastly, he set forth with great plainness the increased dangers in escaping when one has to carry a woman or a wounded man—a thing, he pointed out, which had caused his own capture after Sedgemoor.

Then he opened up to me the whole business of our escape.

'Last Saturday night,' he said, 'while you were sleeping, I made my way to the port, and, having a shilling or so left, I sought out a tavern. There is one hard by the Bridge, a house-of-call for sailors, where I had the good fortune to find a fellow who can do for us all we want—if his money hold out, which I doubt. He is a carver by trade, and a convict, like

ourselves; but is permitted by his master to work at his trade in the town. He hath been, it is true, branded in the hand; but, Lord! what signifies that? He was once a thief—well—he is now an honest lad again, who asks for nothing but to get home again. John Nuthall is his name.'

'Go on, Barnaby. We are already in such good company that another rogue or two matters little.'

'This man came here secretly last night, while you were in the sick-house. He is very hot upon getting away. And because I am a sailor and can navigate a craft (which he cannot do) he will take with him not only myself, but also all my party. Now listen, Humphrey. He hath bought a boat of a Guineaman in the harbour; and because, to prevent the escape of servants, every boat is licensed and her owner has to give security to the Governor's officers, he hath taken this boat secretly up a little creek of which he knows, and hath there sunk her three feet deep. The masts, the sails, the oars, and the other gear he hath also safely

bestowed in a secret place. But we cannot sail without water, provisions, nor without a compass at least. If our party is to consist of Sister, Robin, you, John Nuthall, and myself —five in all—we shall have to load the boat with provisions, and I must have a compass. I looked for a boatful with ourselves and John Nuthall. Now we have Sis as well; and the boat is but small. Where shall we get provisions? and where shall we lay our hands upon the money to buy what we want?'

He could talk of nothing else, because his mind was full of his plan. Yet it seemed to me a most desperate enterprise, thus to launch a small boat upon the wide ocean, and in this cockle-shell to brave the waves which are often fatal to the tallest ships.

'Tut, man,' said Barnaby. 'We are not now in the season of the tornadoes, and there is no other danger upon these seas. I would as lief be in an open boat as in a brigantine. Sharks may follow us, but they will not attack a boat; calamaries they talk of, big enough to lay their arms round the boat and so to drag

it under ; but such monsters have I never seen any more than I have seen the great whale of Norway or the monstrous birds of the Southern Seas. There is only one danger, Humphrey, my lad.' Here he laid his hand upon mine and became mighty serious. 'If we are taken we shall be flogged—all of us. Thirty-nine lashes they will lay on, and they will brand us. For myself, I value not their thirty-nine lashes a brass farthing, nor their branding with a hot iron, which can but make a man jump for a day or two. To me this risk against the chance of escape matters nothing. Why, when I was cabin-boy I got daily more than thirty-nine lashes—kicks, cuffs, and rope's-endings. Nay, I remember, when we sat over the Latin syntax together my daily ration must have been thirty-nine, more or less, and Dad's arm was stronger than you would judge, to look at him. If they catch me, let them lay on their thirty-nine and be damned to them ! But you and Robin, I doubt, think otherwise.'

'I would not willingly be flogged, Barnaby, if there were any way of escape—even by death.'

'So I thought! So I thought!'

'And as for Robin, if he recovers, which I doubt, he too, if I know him, would rather be killed than be flogged.'

'That comes of Oxford!' said Barnaby. 'And then there is Sis. Humphrey, my lad, it goes to my heart to think of that poor girl, stripped to be lashed like a black slave or a Bristol drab.'

'Barnaby, she must never run that dreadful risk.'

'Then she must remain behind, and here she runs that risk every day. What prevents yon drunken sot—the taste of that cudgel still sticks in my gizzard!—I say, what prevents him from tying her up to-day or to-morrow, or every day?'

'Barnaby, I say that she must never run that risk, for if we are caught'——I stopped.

'Before we are caught, you would say, Humphrey. We are of the same mind there. But who is to kill her? Not Robin, for he loves her; not you, because you have too great a kindness for her. Not I, because I

am her brother. What should I say to my mother when I meet her after we are dead, and she asks me who killed Alice?'

'Barnaby, if she is to die, let us all die together.'

'Ay,' he replied, 'though I have, I confess, no great stomach for dying; yet, since we have got her with us, it must be done. 'Tis easy to let the water into the boat, and so in three minutes, with no suspicion at all, and my mother never to know anything about it, she would have said her last prayers and we should be all sinking together with never a gasp left.'

I took him after this talk to the sick-house, where Alice was beginning her second night of nursing. Barnaby saluted his sister as briefly as if her presence was the thing he most expected.

The room was lit by a horn lanthorn containing a great candle, which gave enough light to see Robin on the bed and Alice standing beside him. The woman called Deb was sitting on the floor, wrapped in her rug.

'Sis,' said Barnaby, 'I have heard from Humphrey how thou wast cozened out of thy money and enticed on board ship. Well, this world is full of villains, and I doubt whether I shall live to kill them all. One I must kill and one I must cudgel. Patience, therefore, and no more upon this head. Well, Sis, dost love to be a servant?'

'Surely not, Barnaby.'

'Wouldst like to get thy freedom again?'

'I know not the meaning of thy words, Brother. Madam says that those who have interest at home may procure pardons for their friends in the Plantations. Also that those whose friends have money may buy their freedom from servitude. I am sure that Mr. Boscorel would willingly do this for Robin and for Humphrey; but for myself—how can I ask him? How can I ever let him know where I am and in what condition?'

'Ay, ay, but I meant not that way. Child, wilt thou trust thyself to us?'

She looked at Robin. 'I cannot leave him,' she said.

'No, no; we shall wait until he is dead—or, perhaps, better.' But he only added this to please his sister. 'When he is better, Sis, thou wilt not be afraid to trust thyself with us?'

'I am not afraid of any danger, even of death, with you, if that is the danger in your mind, Barnaby.'

'Good! Then we understand each other. There are other dangers for a young and handsome woman — and, may be, worse dangers. Hast any money at all, by chance?'

'Nay: the man Penne took all my money!'

Barnaby for five or six minutes without stopping spoke upon this topic after the manner of a sailor. 'My turn will come,' he added. 'No money, Child? 'Tis a great pity. Had we a few gold pieces now! Some women have rings and chains. But, of course'——

'Nay, Brother; chains I never had, and as for rings, there were but two that ever I had -one from Robin, the day that I was plighted to him; and one from the man who made me marry him, and put it on in the

church. The former did I break and throw away when I agreed—for your dear lives—Barnaby, oh! for the lives of all '——

'I know, I know,' said Barnaby. 'Patience—patience. Oh! I shall get such a chance some day!'

'The other I threw away when I fled from my husband at the church door.'

'Ay, ay. If we only had a little money! 'Tis pity that we should fail for want of a little money.'

'Why,' said Alice, 'I had quite forgotten. I have something that may bring money.' She pulled from her neck a black ribbon on which was a little leathern bag. ''Tis the ring the Duke gave me at Ilchester long ago. I have never parted with it. "God grant," he said, when he gave it to me, "that it may bring thee luck." Will the ring help, Barnaby?'

I took it first from her hand.

'Why,' I said, 'it is a sweet and costly ring. Jewels I know and have studied. If I mistake not, these emeralds must be worth a

great sum. But how shall we dispose of so valuable a ring in this place, and without causing suspicion?'

'Give it to me.' Barnaby took it, looked at it, and laid it, bag and all, in his pocket. 'There are at the port merchants of all kinds, who will buy a ship's cargo of sugar one minute and the next will sell you a red herring. They will also advance money upon a ring. As for suspicion, there are hundreds of convicts and servants here. 'Tis but to call the ring the property of such an one and no questions will be asked. My friend John Nuthall, the carver, shall do this for us. And now, Sis, I think that our business is as good as done. Have no fear; we shall get away. First get Robin well and then'—— Here Barnaby gazed upon her face with affection and with pity. 'But, Sister, understand rightly: 'tis no child's play of hide and seek. 'Tis life or death!—life or death! If we fly we must never come back again! understand that well.'

'Since we are in the Lord's hands,

Brother, why should we fear? Take me with you ; let me die, if you must die ; and if you live I am content to live with you, so that my husband never find me out.'

CHAPTER XLIV.

A SCARE.

THERE is between the condition of the mind and that of the body an interdependence which cannot but be recognised by every physician. So greatly has this connection affected some of the modern physicians as to cause doubts in their minds whether there be any life at all hereafter, or if, when the pulse ceases to beat, the whole man should become a dead and senseless lump of clay. In this they confuse the immortal soul with the perishable instruments of brain and body, through which in life it manifests its being and betrays its true nature, whether of good or ill.

Thus, the condition in which Robin now lay clearly corresponded, as I now understand,

with the state of his mind induced by the news that Alice, to save his life, had been betrayed into marrying his cousin. For at the hearing of that dreadful news he was seized with such a transport of rage (not against that poor innocent victim, but against his cousin) as threatened to throw him into madness ; and, on recovering from this access, he presently fell into a kind of despair, in which he languished during the whole voyage. So also in a corresponding manner, after a fever the violence of which was like to have torn him to pieces, he fell into a lethargy in which, though his fever left him, he continued to wander in his mind, and grew, as I could not fail to mark, daily weaker in his body, refusing to eat, though Alice brought him dainty broth of chicken, delicate panadas of bread and butter, fruit boiled with sugar, and other things fit to tempt a sick man's appetite, provided by the goodness of Madam. This lady was in religion a Romanist ; by birth she was a Spanish Quadroon. To escape the slavery to which the colour of her

grandmother doomed her, she escaped from Cuba and found her way to Jamaica, where she met with our Master. And whether she was lawfully married unto him I will not, after her kindness to Alice and her faithfulness to myself as regards Robin, so much as ask.

Robin, therefore, though the fever left him, did not mend. On the contrary, as I have said, he grew daily weaker; so that I marvelled at his lasting so long, and looked to see him die, as so many die, in the early morning, when there is a sharpness or eagerness in the air, and the body is exhausted by long sleep. Yet he died not.

And now you shall hear how, through the Duke of Monmouth's ring, we escaped from our servitude. 'God grant,' said the Duke, 'that it bring thee good luck.' This was a light and unconsidered prayer, forgotten as soon as uttered, meant only to please the ear of a child. And yet, in a manner most marvellous to consider, it proved the salvation of us all. What better luck could that ring

cause than that we should escape from the land of Egypt—the House of Bondage?

'I have disposed of the ring,' Barnaby told me a few days later. 'That is to say, John Nuthall has secretly pledged it with a merchant for twenty guineas. He said that the ring belongs to a convict, but many of them have brought such precious things with them in order to buy their freedom. He owns that the stones are fine, and very willingly gave the money on their security.'

'Then nothing remains,' I said, 'but to get away.'

'John Nuthall has bought provisions and all we want little by little, so as to excite no suspicion. They are secretly and safely bestowed, and half the money still remains in his hands. How goes Robin?'

'He draws daily nearer to his grave. We cannot depart until either he mends or dies. 'Tis another disaster, Barnaby.'

'Ay; but of disaster we must not think. Robin will die. Yet our own case may be as bad, if it comes to scuttling the ship. Cheer

up, lads; many men die, but the world goes on. Poor Robin! Every man for himself and the Lord for us all. Sis will cry; but even if Robin recovers he cannot marry her, a consideration which ought to comfort her. And for him—since nothing else will serve him—it is best that he should die. Better make an end at once than go all his life with hanging head for the sake of a woman, as if there are not plenty women in the world to serve his turn.'

'I know not what ails him that he does not get better. The air is too hot for him; he hath lost his appetite. Barnaby,' I cried, moved to a sudden passion of pity such as would often seize me at that time, 'saw one ever ruin more complete than ours? Had we been fighting for Spain and the accursed Inquisition we could not have been more heavily punished. And we were fighting on the Lord's side!'

'We were—Dad was with us, too. And see how he was served! The Lord, it seems, doth not provide His servants with arms, or with ammunition, or with commanders. Otherwise,

the Duke this day would be in St. James's Palace wearing his father's crown, and you would be a Court Physician with a great wig and a velvet coat, instead of a Monmouth cap and a canvas shirt. And I should be an Admiral. But what doth it profit to ask why and wherefore? Let us first get clear of the wreck. Well; I wish we were to take Robin with us. 'Twill be a poor business going back to Bradford Orcas without him.'

We waited, therefore, day after day, for Robin either to get better or to die, and still he lingered, seemingly in a waste or decline; but such as I had never before seen, and I know not what would have happened to him, whether he would have lived or died, but then there happened a thing which caused us to wait no longer. It was this.

The Master, having, according to his daily custom, gone the round of his estate—that is to say, having seen his servants all at work under their drivers; some planting with the hoe, some weeding, some cutting the maize, some gathering yams, potatoes, cassavy, or

bonavist for provisions, some attending the Ingenio or the still-house—did unluckily take into his head to visit the sick-house. What was more unfortunate, this desire came upon him after he had taken a morning dram, and that of the stiffest: not, indeed, enough to make him drunk, but enough to make him obstinate and wilful. When I saw him standing at the open door, I perceived by the glassiness of his eyes and the unsteadiness of his shoulders that he had already begun the day's debauch. He was now in a most dangerous condition of mind. Later in the day, when he was more advanced in drink, he might be violent, but he would be much less dangerous, because he would afterwards forget what he had said or done in his cups.

'So, Sir Doctor,' he said, 'I have truly a profitable pair of servants!—one who pretends to cure everybody and so escapes work, and your cousin, who pretends to be sick and so will do none! A mighty bargain I made, truly, when I bought you both!'

'With submission, Sir,' I said, 'I have

within the last week earned for your Honour ten guineas'-worth of fees.'

'Well, that is as it may be. How do I know what hath gone into your own pocket? Where is this malingering fellow? Make him sit up! Sit up, I say, ye skulking dog! sit up!'

'Sir,' I said, still speaking with the greatest humility, 'nobody but the Lord can make this man sit up.' And, indeed, Robin did not comprehend one word that was said.

'I gave fifty pounds for him only a month ago. Am I to lose all that money, I ask? Fifty pounds! because I was told that he was a gentleman and would be ransomed by his family. Hark ye, Doctor, you must either cure this man for me—or else, by the Lord! you shall have his ransom added to your own. If he dies, I will double your price! Mark that!'

I said nothing, hoping that he would depart. As for Alice, she had turned her back upon him at his first appearance (as

Madam had ordered her to do), so that he might not notice her.

Unfortunately he did not depart, but came into the room looking about him. Certainly he was not one who would suffer his servants to be negligent, even in the smallest things.

'Here is fine work!' he said. 'Sheets of the best—a pillow: what hath a servant to do with such luxuries?'

'My cousin is a gentleman,' I told him, 'and accustomed to lie in linen. The rug which is enough for him in health must have a sheet to it as well, now that he is sick.'

'Humph! And whom have we here? Who art thou, Madam, I wish to know?'

Alice turned.

'I am your Honour's servant,' she said. 'I am employed in this sick-house when I am not in the sewing-room.'

'A servant? Oh! Madam, I humbly crave your pardon. I took you for some fine lady. I am honoured by having such a servant. All the rest of my women servants go in plain smock and petticoat. But,' here

he smiled, 'to so lovely a girl as Alice Eykin—fair Alice, sweet Alice—we must give the bravest and daintiest. To thee, my dear, nothing can be denied. Those dainty cheeks, those white hands, were never made to adorn a common coif. Mistress Alice, we must be better acquainted. This is no fit place for you. Not the sick-house, but the best room in my house shall be at thy service.'

'Sir, I ask for nothing but to sit retired, and to render such service as is in my power.'

'To sit retired? Why, that cannot be longer suffered. 'Twould be a sin to keep hidden any longer this treasure—this marvel, I say, of beauty and grace. My servant! Nay; 'tis I—'tis the whole island—who are thy servants. Thou to render service! 'Tis for me, Madam, to render service to thy beauty.' He took off his hat and flourished it, making a leg.

'Then, Sir,' said Alice, 'suffer me, I pray, to go about my business, which is with this sick man, and not to hear compliments.'

He caught her hand and would have kissed it, but she drew it back.

'Nay, coy damsel,' he said; 'I swear I will not go without a kiss from thy lips! Kiss me, my dear.'

She started back, and I rushed between them. At that moment Madam herself appeared.

'What do you here?' she cried, catching his arm. 'What has this girl to do with you? Come away! Come away and leave her in peace!'

'Go back to the house, woman!' he roared, breaking from her and flourishing his stick, so that I thought he was actually going to cudgel her. 'Go back, or it will be the worse for you. What? Am I master here or you? Go back, I say.'

Then a strange thing happened. She made no reply, but she turned upon him eyes so full of authority that she looked like a Queen. He shifted his feet, made as if he would speak, and finally obeyed, and went out of the place to his own house with

the greatest meekness, soberness, and quietness.

Presently Madam came back.

'I blame thee not, Child,' she said. 'It is with him as I have told thee. When he begins to drink the Devil enters into him. Dost think he came here to see the sick man? No, but for thy fair eyes, inflamed with love as well as with drink. At such times no one can rule him but myself, and even I may fail. Keep snug, therefore. Perhaps he may forget thee again. But, indeed, I know not.'

She sighed, and left us.

CHAPTER XLV.

BARNABY THE AVENGER.

THE man did not come back. During the whole day I remained with Alice in fear. But he molested us not.

When the sun set, and the field hands returned, I was in two minds whether to tell Barnaby what had happened, or not. But when I saw his honest face, streaked with the dust of the day's work, and watched him eating his lump of salt beef and basin of yellow porridge with as much satisfaction as if it had been a banquet of all the dainties, I could not bear, without greater cause, to disturb his mind.

'To-night,' he told me, when there was no more beef and the porridge was all eaten,

'there is a great feast at the Bridge. I would we had some of their Sherris and Madeira. The Governor of Nevis landed yesterday, and is entertained to-day by our Governor. All the militia are feasting, officers and men; nobody will be on the look-out anywhere; and it is a dark night, with no moon. What a chance for us, could we make our escape to-night! There may never again happen such a chance for us! How goes Robin?'

And so after a little more talk we lay down in our hammocks, and I, for one, fell instantly asleep, having no fear at all for Alice; first, because the Master would be now at the Bridge, feasting and too drunk for anything but to sleep; and next, because she had with her the woman Deb, as stout and lusty as any man.

The Master was not at the Bridge with the rest of the planters and gentlemen. Perhaps the drink which he took in the morning caused him to forget the great banquet. However that may be, he was, most unluckily for himself, drinking at home and alone, yet

dressed in his best coat and wig, and with his sword, all of which he had put on for the Governor's banquet.

After a while, the Devil entered into him, finding easy admission, so to speak, all doors thrown wide open, and even a welcome in that deboshed and profligate soul. About eight o'clock, therefore, prompted by the Evil One, the Master rose and stealthily crept out of the house.

It was a dark night, but he needed no light to guide his footsteps. He crossed the court and made straight for the sick-house.

He pushed the door open and stood for a little, looking within. By the light of the horn lanthorn he saw the girl whose image was in his mind. The sight might have caused him to return, repentant and ashamed. For she was on her knees, praying aloud beside the bedside of the sick man.

As he stood in the door the woman named Deb, who lay upon the floor asleep, woke up and raised her head. But he saw her not. Then she sat up, watching him with suspicion.

But his eyes were fixed on the figure of Alice. Then she sprang to her feet, for now she knew that mischief was meant, and she stood in readiness, prepared with her great strong arms to defend her mistress. But he thought nobody was in the house but Alice and the sick man. He saw nothing but the girl at the bedside.

I say that I was sleeping. I was awakened at the sound of a shriek—I knew the voice—I sprang from the hammock.

'God of mercy!' I cried, 'it is Alice! Barnaby, awake!—awake, I say! It is the cry of Alice!'

Then I rushed to the sick-house.

There I saw Alice—shrieking and crying for help. And before her the Master struggling and wrestling with the woman Deb. She had her arms round his neck and made as if she was trying to throttle him. Nay, I think that she would have throttled him, so strong she was and possessed of such a spirit, and by the light of the lanthorn gleaming upon the blade I saw that his sword had

either fallen from his hand or from the scabbard, and now lay upon the floor.

'Stand back,' cried Barnaby, pushing me aside. 'Leave go of him, woman. Let me deal with him.'

The thing was done in a moment. Merciful Heavens! To think that thus suddenly should the soul of man be called to its account! I had seen the poor fellows shot down and cut to pieces on Sedgemoor, but then they knew that they were going forth to fight and so might be killed. There was time before the battle for a prayer. But this man had no time—and he was more than half drunk as well.

He lay at our feet, lifeless, Barnaby standing over him with a broken sword in his hand.

For a while no one spoke or moved. But the woman called Deb gasped and panted and even laughed, as one who is well pleased because she hath had her revenge.

Then Madam herself, clad in a long white night-dress, and with bare feet, suddenly

pushed us aside and fell upon her knees beside the wounded man.

She lifted his head. The face was pale and the eyes closed. She laid it gently down and looked round.

'You have killed him,' she said, speaking not in a rage or passion, but quietly. 'You have killed him. To-morrow you will hang! you will all hang!'

We said nothing.

'Doctor,' she turned to me, 'tell me if he is dead or living.'

She snatched the lanthorn and held it while I made such examination as was possible. I opened his waistcoat and laid back his shirt. The sword had run straight through him and broken off short, perhaps by contact with his ribs. The broken point remained in the wound, and the flesh had closed around it so that, save for a drop of blood or two oozing out, there was no flow.

It needs no great knowledge to understand that when a man hath six inches of steel in his body which cannot be pulled out,

and when he is bleeding inwardly, he must die.

Still, as physicians use, I did not tell her so.

'Madam,' I said, 'he is not dead. He is living. While there is life, there is hope.'

'Oh!' she cried; 'why did he buy you when he could have had the common sort? You will hang—you will hang, every one!'

'That shall we presently discover,' said Barnaby. 'Humphrey, we have now no choice left—what did I tell thee about the chances of the night? We must go this night. As for this villain, let him bleed to death.'

'Go!' said Madam. 'Whither, unhappy men, will you go? There is no place in the island where you can hide, but with blood-hounds they will have you out. You can go nowhere in this island but you will be found and hanged, unless you are shot like rats in a hole.'

'Come, Humphrey,' said Barnaby, 'we will carry Robin. This poor woman must go

too ; she will else be hanged for trying to throttle him. Well, she can lend a hand to carry Robin. Madam, by your leave we will not hang, nor will we be shot. In the—in the—the cave—cave that I know of your bloodhounds will never find us.'

'Madam,' I said, 'it is true that we shall attempt to escape. For what hath happened I am truly sorry ; yet we may not suffer such a thing as was this night attempted without resistance, else should we be worse than the ignorant blacks. The Master will perhaps live, and not die. Listen, and take heed therefore.'

'Doctor,' she said, 'do not leave me. Stay with me, or he will die. Doctor, stay with me, and I will save your life. I will swear that you came at my call. Stay with me—I will save Alice as well. I will save you both. You shall be neither flogged nor hanged. I swear it. I will say that I called you for help when it was too late. Only this man and this woman shall hang. Who are they ? A rogue and '——

Barnaby laughed aloud.

'Doctor,' she said, 'if you stay he will perhaps recover and forgive you all.'

Barnaby laughed again.

'Madam,' I told her, 'better death upon the gallows than any further term of life with such a man.'

'Oh!' she cried. 'He will die where he is lying!'

'That may be. I know not.' I gave her certain directions, bidding her, above all, watch the man, and cause him to lie perfectly quiet and not to speak a word, even in a whisper, and to give him a few drops of cordial from time to time.

'Come,' said Barnaby, 'we lose time, which is precious. Madam, if your husband recover—and for my part I care nothing whether he recover or whether he die—but if he should recover, tell him from me, Captain Barnaby Eykin, that I shall very likely return to this island, and that I shall then, the Lord helping, kill him in fair duello, to wipe out the lash of the cudgel which he was good

enough once to lay about my head. If he dies of this trifling thrust with his own sword he must lay that to the account of my Sister. Enough,' said Barnaby, 'we will now make our way to the woods and the cave.'

This said, Barnaby went to the head of Robin's bed and ordered Deb to take the foot, and so between them they carried him forth with them, while Alice followed and I went last.

We heard, long afterwards, through one Mr. Anstiss, the same young gentleman who loved Alice and would have married her, what had happened when we were gone. An hour or thereabouts afterwards, Madam woke up one of the overseers, telling him what had happened, and bidding him be ready at day-break, with the bloodhounds, horses, and loaded guns, to follow in pursuit and bring us back.

There would be, they thought, no difficulty at all in catching us, because we were encumbered by a sick man and two women.

There was, however, more difficulty than

they expected. For the footsteps led the bloodhounds to the seashore ; and here the trace was lost, nor could it ever be afterwards recovered. And though the hue and cry was out over all the island, and the woods and the ravines and caves where runaway negroes hide were searched, we were never found. Therefore, since no boat at all was missing (the Guineaman had sailed away), it was certain that we could not have escaped by sea. It was fortunate, indeed, that Barnaby dropped no hint about the sea ; otherwise there would have been despatched some of the boats of the port in search of us, and in that case the scuttling of the ship might have been necessary. For, had we been caught, we should certainly have been hanged for murder, after being flogged for attempted escape. For the Master died. He lay speechless until the day broke. Then he became conscious and presently breathed his last in great anguish of body and terror of mind. What hath since become of Madam and of that miserable family of servants and slaves, I know not. Certain

it is that they could not find a more barbarous or a more savage master in place of him whom Barnaby slew, if they were to search the whole of the Spanish Main and the islands upon it.

CHAPTER XLVI.

A PERILOUS VOYAGE.

IN this way, unexpected and tragical, arrived our chance of escape. We walked to Carlisle Bay by way of the sea-shore, so that we might be met by none, and in order that the bloodhounds (if they should use them) in the morning might be thrown off the track. On the march that stout and lusty wench who carried one end of the bed neither called for a halt nor complained of the burden she carried all the way. It was nigh unto midnight when we arrived at the creek in which the boat lay sunk. This was within a stone's throw of John Nuthall's cottage, where were bestowed the mast, sails, oars, and gear, with such provisions as he had gotten together for the

voyage. The man was sleeping when Barnaby called him, but he quickly got up, and in less than an hour we had the boat hauled out of the water, the provisions hastily thrown in, the mast stepped, our sick man and the women placed in the bows, the stern and middle of the boat being encumbered with our provisions ; we had pushed down the muddy and stinking creek, we had hoisted sail, and we were stealing silently out of Carlisle Bay under a light breeze. Three or four ships were lying in the bay; but either there was no watch kept aboard or (which is more probable) it was no one's business to hail a small sail-boat going out, probably for fishing at dawn. Besides, the night was so dark that we may very well have escaped notice. However that might be, in a quarter of an hour we were well out at sea, beyond the reach of the guns of Carlisle Bay, no longer visible to the ships in port, and without any fear of being seen until daybreak. The wind, which sometimes drops altogether in the night, still continued favourable, though very light.

'My lads,' said Barnaby presently, drawing a long breath, 'I verily believe that we have given them the slip this time. In the morning they may go forth, if they please, with their bloodhounds to hunt for us. Let them hunt. If any inquiry is made for us at the Bridge, no boat will be missing, and so no suspicion will be awakened. They will then, I suppose, search for us among the caves and ravines of which I have heard, where there are hiding-places in plenty, but no water to drink, so that the poor devils who run away and seek a refuge there are speedily forced to come out for water, and so are caught or shot down. Well, they will hunt a long time before they find us. This boat makes a little water, but I think not much. If she proves water-tight, and the breeze holds, by daylight we should be well to the south of the island. Courage, therefore! All will be well yet! How goes Robin?'

He was lying as easily as we could manage for him—one rug over him and another under him. Alice sat on one side of him, and the

woman they called 'Deb' on the other. Then, because the boat sometimes shipped a little water when she dipped in the waves, Barnaby rigged a tarpaulin round the bows to prevent this; and (but this was not till next day) over the tarpaulin he made out of a rug and a spare spar a low tilt which, unless the weather grew bad, should shelter those three by night from dew and spray, and by day from the sun overhead and the glare and heat of the water.

'Deb,' he said softly, 'art afraid?'

'No, Sir—not while my mistress is here.' (Meaning Alice.)

'If we are taken, we shall all be flogged well nigh unto death, and very likely hanged as well.'

'I am not afraid, Sir.'

'We may spring a leak,' said Barnaby, 'and so go all to the bottom and be devoured. Art not afraid to die?'

'No, Sir—not if I may hold my mistress by the hand so that she may take me whither she goeth herself.'

'Good,' said Barnaby. 'As for me, I

expect I shall have to go alone or with John Nuthall here. Well, there will be a goodly company of us. Go to sleep, my girl! In the morning we will serve around the first ration, with perhaps, if all be well, a dram of cordial.'

In the dim light of the stars I watched all night the three figures in the bow. Robin lay white and motionless ; Alice sat, covered with her hood, bending over him ; and Deb, from whose head her coif had fallen, lay, head on arm, sound asleep. She had no fear, any more than a common soldier has when he goes into action, because he trusts his Captain.

Thus began our voyage : in an open boat twenty feet long, with a company of three sound men, two women, and a sick man. For arms, in case we needed them, we had none at all. If any ship crossed our track and should call upon us to surrender we could not deny that we were escaped convicts, because the dress of all but one proclaimed the fact. Who, in such a climate, would choose to wear a coarse shirt and canvas breeches, with a

Monmouth cap, except it was a servant or a slave who had no choice, but must take what is given him ?

But we should not surrender, come what might. If we could neither fight nor fly, we could sink. Said Barnaby in the dead of night, whispering in my ear, 'Lad, 'tis agreed between us, we will have that clear : sooner than be taken, we will scuttle the ship, and so sink all together. If 'tis accounted murder, the blame shall lie between us.'

A little before daybreak the breeze freshened, and the waves began to rise ; but not so high as to threaten the boat, which proved, indeed, a most gallant little craft, dancing over the waters as if she enjoyed being driven by the breeze. Some boats, as sailors will tell you (being always apt to compare these craft with living creatures), come thus, frolic and sprightly, from their makers' hands ; while others, built of the same material and on the same lines, are, on the contrary, and always remain, heavy and lumpish ; just as some children are lively and gay, while others,

born of the same parents, are dull and morose.

Then the sun rose, seeming to leap out of the water, a most glorious ball of fire, which instantly warmed the cool air and began to burn and scorch our hands and faces. In these hot latitudes one understands what the ancients meant when they spoke of the dreadful Sun-God, who both gives and destroys life, and is so beneficial and yet so terrible. We, who live in a cold country, are sometimes greatly comforted by the sun, but are never burned; we feel his warmth, but understand not his power.

Then Barnaby began to gaze curiously all round the horizon. We had no glass or telescope; but his eyes were to him as good as any telescope is to most men.

'Thank the Lord!' he said, drawing breath (it was rare for Barnaby thus openly to give praise), 'there is no sail in sight. To be sure, we have the day before us. But yet'—here he began to talk as some men use when they desire to place before their own

minds clearly the position of affairs. 'Very well, then—Barbadoes laying thirty miles and more nor'-east by north—vessels bound for the island from Bristol commonly sailing round the north—very well, then—we are out of their track. Yet—then again—some are driven south by stress of weather. Ay, there is our danger. Yet again, if one should see us, would she bear down upon us? I greatly doubt it. The wind will continue—that is pretty sure. If they were to discover that we had gone by boat, would they sail after us? Why—what boat could they send? And whither would they steer? And what boat have they that can sail faster than this little craft? Yet we are pretty low down in the water. Humphrey, lad'—he turned upon me his broad and sunburnt face, full of cheerfulness—'we are not within many hours of scuttling yet. A tight boat, a fair wind, a smooth sea—let us hope for the best! How goes Robin?'

There was no change in Robin, either for better or for worse.

'Sis,' said Barnaby; 'art sleeping still, Sis? Wake up, and let us eat and drink, and be jolly! What! Alice, I say! Why—we have escaped! We are far away at sea! Let us laugh and sing. If there were room in this cockle, I would dance also!'

She lifted her head, and threw back her hood. Ah! what a mournful face was there!

'Oh, Brother!' she said, 'canst thou laugh and sing? Hast thou forgotten last night?'

'Why, no,' he replied. 'One must not forget last night, because it was the night of our escape. All else, I own, I can forget. Let it not stick in thy gizzard, my dear, that the man frightened thee. Rejoice rather that he thus afforded me a chance of giving him a taste of his own cold iron.'

'Nay, Brother,' she said, shaking her head; then she looked round her. 'We are a long way from the land,' she said. 'When will they send out a ship to bring us back?'

'Why, d'ye see,' Barnaby replied, 'give us twelve hours more, and they may send out all their fleet, if they have one, and sail the wide

world round for us, and yet not capture us. And now let us overhaul the provisions, and examine the ship's stores.' Alice pulled her hood down again, and said no more. The woman they called 'Deb' was now wide awake, and staring about her with the greatest satisfaction.

'Come, John Nuthall,' Barnaby went on, 'we are hungry and thirsty. Where is the list I made for thee? Thou art our purser, our supercargo, our cook, and our steward; thou art also bo's'n and carpenter, and half the crew. Where is my list, I say? Give it me, and we will examine our stores. Look up, Sis; never cry over what is done and over. What? A villain hath received a lesson, and thou hangest thy head therefore? Look up, I say. There is now hope for all; thou shalt merrily dance at my wedding yet.'

Then he read the list and examined each parcel or box with great care.

'A hundred and a half of bread, a soft cheese, plantains, a keg of water (nine gallons), six bottles of Canary (not one broken), a com-

pass, a half-hour glass, a spare rug ('tis over Robin's legs), flint and steel, a bit of tarpaulin, a hatchet and hammer, a saw, some nails, a spar or two, a coil of rope and yarn, a lump of tobacco (we can chew it, though I would rather put it into a pipe), candles—faugh! they are run together in a lump; they will serve to caulk something presently.'

We had, in fact, no light during our voyage, but the tallow proved useful when—I think it was the next day—the boat started a leak.

This was all our store. 'Twas not much for six people, but Barnaby hoped that the voyage would be short. If he should be disappointed, who would not put up with short rations for a day or two for the sake of freedom?

'And now,' he said, when everything was stowed according to his mind, 'we will have breakfast. Our provisions are no great things; but, after the accursed loblollie, a bit of bread and cheese will be a feast.'

A feast indeed it was, and our Captain gratified us further by opening a flask of

Canary, which raised all our hearts. Strange that men should be able to recover their spirits, which should be independent of the creature comforts, by a dram of wine. As for Barnaby, I thought he would have kissed the bottle.

'It is now three months and more,' he said, 'that we have had nothing save a sup of kill-devil fresh from the still, and now we are mercifully permitted to taste again a glass of Canary. 'Tis too much!' he sighed, drinking his ration. 'Well, we have but a few bottles, and the voyage may be longer than we hope; therefore we must go upon short allowance. But fear not, Sis: there shall always be enough for Robin, poor lad.'

He then proceeded to tell us what he intended, and whither he would steer.

'We have no chart,' he said. 'What then? I can draw one as good as they are made to steer by in these seas.' He could not draw one, because he had no paper or pencil; but he carved one with the point of his knife on the seat, and marked out

our course upon it day by day. 'See,' he said: 'here is Barbadoes. Our course all night hath been sou'-west. She now makes five knots an hour. It is now eight, I take it; and we must therefore be about forty miles from Barbadoes. To-morrow morning we should make the Grenadilloes, which are a hundred and fifty miles from Carlisle Bay. Hark ye! There may be a Bristol vessel sailing from Great Grenada to Barbadoes, or the other way. That would be the Devil. But such ships are rare, and there is no trade between the two islands. Well, we shall give Grenada as wide a berth as may be.' Here he considered a little. 'Therefore, 'twill be our wiser plan to bear more to the south. Once south of Grenada, I take it, there will be no more danger. Off the main of South America the sea is covered with islands. They are No-Man's Land: inhabitants have they none: navigators, for the most part, know them not: English, French, and Spanish ships come never to these islands. My purpose, therefore, is to put in at Great Margaritos or

Tortuga for rest and fresh water, and so presently make the Dutch island of Curaçao.'

'And after that?'

'Then, my lad, we shall take ship to some country where a sailor may get a berth and a physician may find patients. It must be to Holland first; but, never fear, we shall get back to England some time; and perhaps fight another battle with a different tale to tell afterwards.'

As the day advanced, the coast of Barbadoes continually receded, until, before sunset, the island lay like a purple cloud low down on the horizon. The north-east breeze blew steadily, but the sun caused a most dreadful heat in the air, and our eyes smarted from the glare of the water and the spray that was blown upon us. It was at this time that Barnaby constructed the tilt of which I have spoken. The sea lay spread out round us in a broad circle, of which we were the centre, and the cloudless blue sky lay over us like unto a roof laid there for us alone. It is only in a ship one doth feel

thus alone, in the centre of creation ; even as if there were nothing but the sea around, the sky above, and our boat in the centre. Thus must the Patriarch Noah have felt when his Ark floated upon the vast face of the water, and even the tops of the high hills were hidden and covered over. All day Barnaby scanned the horizon anxiously ; but there came into sight no sail or ship whatever. To us, who sometimes see the vessels lying in a crowded port, and hear how they bring argosies from every land, it seems as if every part of the ocean must be covered with sails driving before the wind from whatever quarter it may blow. But he who considers the 'Mappa Mundi' will presently discover that there are vast expanses of sea where never a sail is seen, unless it be the fugitive sail of the pirate or the bark canoe of the native. We were now nearing such a lonely sea or part of the ocean. Barnaby knew, what these planters did not, how to steer across the unknown water to a port of safety beyond.

At mid-day our Captain served out another drink of water, and to Robin I gave a sop of bread in Canary, which he seemed to suck up and to swallow with readiness.

In such a voyage, where there is nothing to do but to keep the ship on her course and to watch the horizon for a strange sail, one speedily falls into silence, and sits many hours without speech; sometimes falling asleep, lulled by the ripple of the water as the boat flies through it.

I have said nothing about the man, John Nuthall. He was a plain, honest-looking man, and we found him throughout all this business faithful, brave, and patient, obedient to Barnaby, and of an even temper and contented with his share. That he had formerly been a thief in his native country cannot be denied, but I hope that we shall not refuse to any man the right of repentance.

Barnaby divided the crew—namely, himself, John Nuthall, and me—into three watches of eight hours each, of which each man kept two at a stretch. Thus beginning

the day at noon, which was the only time we knew for certain, Barnaby would himself (but this was after the first two days) lie down and sleep till sunset or a little later. Then John Nuthall lay down and took his turn of sleep till Barnaby thought it was two o'clock in the morning, when he woke him and I took his place. But for the first day or two Barnaby slept not at all, and the whole of the voyage he slept as a good watch-dog sleeps, namely, with one eye open.

At sunset he gave out another pannikin of cold water to each of us, a ration of bread and cheese, and a dram of wine. Then he commanded John Nuthall to lie down and sleep, while I took the tiller and he himself held the ropes. Then the night fell once more upon us.

Presently, while we sat there in silence, Alice rose up from her seat, and came aft and sat down beside me.

'Humphrey,' she whispered, 'think you that he is truly dead?' She was speaking, not of Robin, but of the Master.

'I know not, my dear.'

'I can think of nothing but of that man's sudden end, and of what may happen to us. Say something to comfort me, Humphrey! You always had some good word to say, like manna for refreshment. My soul is low in the dust—I cannot even pray.'

'Why, my dear?' What could I say? ''Tis true that the man was struck down, and that suddenly. And yet'——

'To think that my brother—that Barnaby—should have killed him!'

'Why,' said Barnaby, 'if some one had to kill him, why not I as well as another? What odds who killed him?'

'Oh!' she said, 'that a man should be called away at such a moment, when his brain was reeling with wine and wicked thoughts!'

'He was not dead,' I told her (though I knew very well what would be the end), 'when we came away. Many a man recovers who hath had a sword-thrust through the body. He may now be on the mend—who can tell?' Yet I knew, I say, very well how

it must have ended. 'Consider, my dear: he tempted the wrath of God, if any man ever did. If he is destroyed, on his own head be it—not on ours. If he recover, he will have had a lesson which will serve him for the rest of his life. If he doth not recover, he may have time left him for something of repentance and of prayer. Why, Alice, if we get safely to our port we ought to consider the punishment of this sinner (which was in self-defence, as one may truly say) the very means granted by Providence for our own escape. How else should we have got away? How else should we have resolved to venture all, even to carrying Robin with us?' All this, I repeat, I said to encourage her, because, if I know aught of wounds, a man bleeding inwardly of a sword-thrust through his vitals would have short time for the collecting of his thoughts or the repentance of his sins, being as truly cut off in the midst of them as if he had been struck down by a thunderbolt. A man may groan and writhe under the dreadful torture of such a

wound, but there is little room for meditation or for repentance.

Then I asked her if she was in fear as to the event of the voyage.

'I fear nothing,' she told me, 'but to be captured and taken back to the place whence we came, there to be put in prison and flogged. That is my only fear. Humphrey, we have suffered so much that this last shame would be too great for me to bear. Oh! to be tied up before all the men, and flogged like the black women—'twould kill me, Humphrey!'

'Alice,' I said very earnestly, 'art thou, indeed, brave enough to endure death itself rather than this last barbarity?'

'Oh! Death!—death!' she cried, clasping her hands. 'What is death to me, who have lost everything?'

'Nay, but consider, my dear. To die at sea—it means to sink down under the cold water out of the light of day; to be choked for want of air; perhaps to be devoured quick by sharks; to lie at the bottom of the water,

the seaweed growing over your bones; to be rolled about by the troubled waves'——

'Humphrey, these are old wives' tales. Why, if it had been lawful I would have killed myself long ago. But I must not lose Heaven as well as earth. A brief pang it is to die, and then to be happy for ever. What do I care whether the seaweed covers my bones, or the cold clay? Oh! Humphrey, Humphrey, why should I care any longer to live?'

'My dear,' I said, 'if we escape in safety there may yet be happiness in store. No man knoweth the future.' She shook her head. 'Happiness,' I told her, 'doth not commonly come to man in the way which he most desires and prays. For, if he doth obtain the thing for which he hath so ardently prayed, he presently finds that the thing bringeth not the joy he so much expected. Or it comes too late, as is the case often with honours and wealth, when one foot is already in the grave. I mean, my dear, that we must not despair because the thing which most we desired is taken from us. Perhaps we

ought not to desire anything at all, except what the Lord shall provide. But that is a hard saying, and if men desired nothing it is certain that they would no longer work.' I talked thus at length to divert her mind from her troubles. 'To thee, poor child,' I said, 'have been given afflictions many and great—the loss of godly parents, a husband whom thou must avoid, and the deprivation of earthly love. Yet, since thou art so brave, Alice, I will tell thee—I thought not to tell thee anything of this '——

'What, Humphrey? What?'

'Briefly, Alice, thou shalt not be taken alive.'

'How? unless you kill me?'

'We are agreed, my dear—Barnaby and I—that if we cannot escape any boats which may pursue us the boat shall be sunk, and so we shall all drown together. Indeed, Alice, I confess that I am not myself so much in love with life as to return to that captivity and intolerable oppression from which we have gotten away. Therefore, be assured, we will all drown rather than go back.'

'Oh!' she sighed, but with relief, 'now shall I fear nothing. I have not lost everything, since I have thee still—and Barnaby. Alas! my head has been so full of what Madam said—that we should be certainly caught, and all of us flogged. To be flogged! Who would not rather die?'—she shivered and trembled. 'To be flogged! —Humphrey, I could not bear the shame!' She trembled and shivered as she repeated this confession of fear.

'Fear not, my dear,' I said; 'there are those on the boat who love thee too well to suffer that extreme of barbarity. Put that fear out of thy mind. Think only that we may have to die, but that we shall not be taken. To die, indeed, is very likely our fate: for we have but a quarter of an inch of frail wood between us and the seas. If a storm should arise, we fill with water and go down; if the wind should drop, we should be becalmed, and so perish miserably of hunger and thirst; if Barnaby steer not aright'——

'Humphrey,' said Barnaby, 'fill not her

innocent head with rubbish. 'Tis not the time of tornadoes, and there will be no storm. The wind at this season never drops, therefore we shall not lie becalmed. And as for my steering aright, why, with a compass—am I a lubber ?'

'Brother,' she said, 'if I am not to be flogged, the rest concerns me little. Let us say no more about it. I am now easy in my mind. Robin sleeps, Humphrey. He hath slept since the sun went down, and this afternoon he looked as if he knew me. Also, he took the bread sopped in Canary eagerly, as if he relished it.'

'These seas,' said Barnaby, 'are full of sharks.'

I knew not what he meant, because we were speaking of Robin.

'Sharks have got their senses, as well as humans,' he went on.

Still, I understood him not.

'When a man on board a ship is going to die, the sharks find it out and they follow that ship until he does die and is flung overboard.

Then they devour his body and go away, unless there is more to follow. I have looked for sharks, and there are none following the boat; wherefore, though I am not a doctor, I am sure that Robin will not die.'

'I know not at all,' I said, 'how that may be. There are many things believed by sailors which are superstitions—fond beliefs nourished by the continual presence of perils. On the other hand, the senses of man are notoriously as far below those of creatures as their intellects are above them (yet a skilful man may read the premonition of death in a sick man's face). Therefore I know not but a shark may have a sense like unto the eye of a hawk or the scent of a hound, with which to sniff the approach of death afar off. Let us comfort ourselves, Alice, with Barnaby's assurance.'

''Tis a well proved and tried thing,' said Barnaby; 'and sailors, let me tell thee, Master Doctor, have no superstitions or idle beliefs.'

'Well, that may be. As to Robin's disease,

I can pronounce nothing upon it. Nay, had I the whole library of Padua to consult, I could learn nothing that would help me. First, the mind falls into a languishing and spiritless condition. That causeth the body to lie open to attacks of any disease which may be threatening. Then, the body, being ill at ease, works upon the mind, and causes it to wander beyond control. So that the soul, which is bound up with body and mind, cannot show herself or manifest her will. It is the will which shows the presence of the soul: the will which governs body and mind alike. But if I know aught of disease, if a change comes upon Robin it will either swiftly cure or swiftly kill.'

'Humphrey,' she whispered, 'if he recover, how shall I meet his face? How shall I reply when he asks me concerning my faith?'

'My dear, he knows all. 'Twas that knowledge, the pity of it, and the madness of it—believe me—which threw him into so low a condition.'

'I have looked daily for reproaches in thy kind eyes, Humphrey I have found none,

truly. But from Robin—oh ! I dare not think of meeting those eyes of his.'

'Reproach thee will he never, Alice. Sorrow and love, I doubt not, will lie in his eyes all his life. What thou hast done was for him and for thy father and thy brother and for all of us. But, oh ! the pity—and the villainy ! Fear not to meet the poor lad's eyes, Alice.'

'I long to see the light of reason in those dear eyes—and yet I fear. Humphrey, I am married ; but against my will. I am a wife, and yet no wife ; I am resolved that, come what may, I will never, never go to my husband. And I love my Robin still—oh ! ' she sobbed, 'I love my Robin still ! '

'If we die,' I told her, 'you shall go down with your arm round his neck, and so you shall die together.'

Then we sat silent a while.

'My dear,' I said, 'lie down and take some sleep.'

'I cannot sleep, Humphrey, for the peace of mind which hath fallen upon me. If Robin

now come to his senses again I shall not fear him. And the night, it is so peaceful—so cool and so peaceful '—the wind had dropped, till there was barely enough to fill the sail, and only enough way on the boat to make a soft murmur of the water along her sides. 'The sea is so smooth ; the sky is so bright and so full of stars. Can there be, anywhere, a peace like this ? Alas ! if we could sail still upon a silent and peaceful ocean ! But we must land somewhere. There will be men, and where there are men there is wickedness, with drink and wrath and evil passions—such as we have left behind us. Humphrey—oh ! my brother Humphrey !—it would be sweet if the boat would sink beneath us now, and so, with Robin's hand in mine, we could all go together to the happy land, where there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage.'

From beneath the tilt there came a voice —I verily believe it was an answer sent straight from Heaven to comfort this poor faithful soul. 'Alice'—it was the voice of Robin, in his right mind at last. 'Alice,' he

said, 'we will continue to love each other, yet without sin.'

'Oh, Robin! Robin!' she moved quickly to his side and fell upon her knees. 'Robin, thou wilt recover!'

'Stay,' I interposed. 'Robin will first have a cup of cordial.'

'I have been sleeping,' he said: 'I know not what hath happened. We are in a boat, it seems, and on the open sea! Unless I am still dreaming, we are slaves to a planter in Barbadoes! And this is Alice—who was in England! And I know not what it means!'

'You have been ill, Robin,' I told him. 'You have been nigh unto death. Many things have happened of which we will speak, but not now. Alice is at your side, and Barnaby is navigating the boat. Drink this cup of wine—so—sleep now; and in the morning, if it please Heaven, you shall be so strong that you shall hear everything. Ask no more questions, but sleep. Give him your hand, Alice.'

She obeyed me, sitting at his side and taking his hand in hers, and so continued for the rest of the night, Robin sleeping peacefully.

In a word, he was restored. The fresh sea-breeze brought him back to life and reason; and, though he was still weak, he was now as sound in his mind as any man could desire to be. And in the morning we told him all that had been done, whereat he marvelled.

Alice might love him still. That was most true: yet between them stood—her husband. Why, there was another man in the boat who also loved a girl he could never wed. His passion, I swear, was full of constancy, tenderness, and patience. Would Robin be as patient?

When the day broke again we were still sailing over a lonely sea, with never a sail in sight, and never a sign of land.

And now Robin was sitting up, his face pale and his hands thin. But the light of reason was in his eyes, and on his lips such

a smile of tenderness as we were wont to see there in the days of old.

'Said I not,' cried Barnaby, 'that he would recover? Trust the sharks for common-sense. And again an open sea, with never a sail in sight. Praise the Lord, therefore!'

But Alice, when the sun rose above the waves, threw back her hood and burst forth into singing:—

> O Lord, how glorious is thy grace,
> And wondrous large thy Love!
> At such a dreadful time and place,
> To such as faithful prove.

The tears came into my eyes only to see the change that had fallen upon her gracious, smiling countenance. It was not, truly, the sweet and happy face that we remembered before her troubles fell upon her, but that face graver with the knowledge of evil and of pain. And now it was like unto such a face as one may see in many an altar-piece in Italy, glorified with gratitude and love.

Then the woman called 'Deb' fell to

weeping and blubbering for very joy that her mistress looked happy again. 'Twas a faithful, loving creature.

'Humphrey,' said Alice, 'forgive me that I murmured. Things that are done cannot be undone. Robin is restored to us. With three such brothers, who should not be content to live? I hope, now, that we shall get safely to our port; but, if we die, we shall die contented, in each other's arms. Going through the Vale of Misery,' she added softly, 'we will use it as a well.'

CHAPTER XLVII.

TORTUGA.

'I TAKE it,' said Barnaby, on the third morning—the weather continuing fine and the sea clear of ships—'that we are now clear out of the track of any British vessels. We may fall into the hands of the Spaniard; but he is mild and merciful of late compared with his temper a hundred years ago. 'Tis true we have given him many lessons in humanity. We should now before nightfall make the islands of Testigos; but I think they are only rocks and sandy flats, such as they call Keys, where we need not land, seeing that we should get nothing by so doing, except to go out of the way, and so make the rations shorter. Robin'—'twas at breakfast, when

he served out a dram of wine to everyone—'I drink to thy better health, lad. Thou hast cheated the Devil. Nay, Sis, look not so angry !—I meant, thou will not go to Heaven this bout. Up heart, then, and get strong ! We will find thee another sweetheart, who shall make thee lift up thy head again. What ? Is there but one woman in the world ?

'I was saying, then,' he went on, 'that we shall presently make the islands of Testigos. There followeth thereafter, to one who steereth west, a swarm of little islands. 'Twas here that the pirates used to lie in the good old days, snug and retired, with their girls and their drink. Ay, and plenty of both ! A happy time they had !' Barnaby wagged his head and sighed. 'South of this archipelago (which I will some day visit, in order to search for treasure) there lieth the great and mountainous island of Margaritos. This great island we shall do well to keep upon our south, and so bear away to the desert island of Tortuga, where we shall find

water for certain—and that, I have been told, the best spring water that flows ; turtles we may also find, and fish we may catch ; and when we have recovered our strength, with a few days' rest ashore, we will once more put to sea and make for the island of Curaçao and the protection of the Dutchmen.'

It needs not to tell much more about the voyage, in which we were favoured by Heaven with everything that we could desire —a steady breeze from the best quarter, a sea never too rough, provisions in sufficiency, the absence of any ships, and, above all, the recovery of Robin.

I say, then, that we sighted (and presently passed) the group of islets called the Testigos ; that we coasted along the great island of Margaritos, where we landed not, because Barnaby feared that certain smoke which we saw might betoken the presence of the Spaniard, whom, in spite of his new character for mildness, he was anxious to avoid. 'Tis strange thus to sail along the shore of a great island whereon are no in-

habitants, or, if any, a few sailors put in for water, for turtle, and for cocoanuts—to see afar off the forests climbing round the mountain sides, the waterfalls leaping over the precipices—and to think of the happy life one might lead in such a place, far from men and their ways. I confess (since my Mistress will never see this page) that my thoughts for a whole day, while we sailed along the shores of Margaritos, turned upon those pirates of whom Barnaby spoke. They lived here at ease, and in great happiness. 'Tis of such a life that a man sometimes dreams. But, if he were suffered so to lie in sloth, farewell Heaven! Farewell future hopes! Farewell our old talk of lifting the soul above the flesh! Let us henceforth live the lives of those who are content (since they can have no more) with a few years of love and wine and revelry! It is in climates like that of the West Indies that such a temptation seizes on men the most strongly: for here everything is made for man's enjoyment; here is no cold, no frost, no snow or

ice; here eternal summer reigns, and the world seems made for the senses and for nothing else. Of these confessions enough. 'Twas impossible that in such a luxurious dream the image of Alice could have any part.

We landed, therefore, on the desert island of Tortuga, where we remained for several days, hauling up our boat and covering her with branches to keep off the sun. Here we lived luxuriously upon turtle, fresh fish, the remains of our bread, and what was left of our Canary; setting up huts in which we could sleep, and finding water of the freshest and brightest I ever saw. Here Robin mended apace and began to walk about with no more help from his nurses.

We were minded, as I have said, to sail as far as the island of Curaçao, but an accident prevented this.

One day, when we had been ashore for ten days or thereabouts, we were terrified by the sight of a small vessel rigged in the fashion of a ketch—that is, with a small

mizen—beating about outside the bay which is the only port of Tortuga.

'She will put in here,' said Barnaby. 'That is most certain. Now, from the cut of her she is of New England build, and from the handling of her she is under-manned; and I think that we have nothing to fear from her, unless she is bound for Barbadoes, or for Grenada, or Jamaica.'

Presently the vessel came to anchor, and a small boat was lowered, into which three men descended. They were unarmed.

'She is certainly from New England,' said Barnaby. 'Well, they are not from Barbadoes in quest of us, otherwise they would not send ashore three unarmed men to capture four desperate men. That is certain. And as we cannot hide our boat, though we might hide ourselves, I will e'en go forth and parley with these strangers.'

This he did, we watching from a safe place. The conversation was long and earnest, and, apparently, friendly. Presently Barnaby returned to us.

'There offers,' he said, 'a chance which is perhaps better than to make for Curaçao, where, after all, we might get scurvy treatment. These men, in a word, are privateers; or, since we are at war with none, they are pirates. They fitted out a brigantine, or bilander (I know not which), and designed to sail round Cape Horn to attack the Spaniard on the South Seas. On the way they took a prize, which you now see in the bay. Ten men were sent aboard to navigate her as a tender to their ship. But they fell into bad weather off Brazil, and their ship went down with all hands. Now they are bound for Providence, only seven hands left, and they will take us aboard and carry us to that island for our services. Truly, I think we should go. They have provisions in plenty, with Madeira wine; and Providence is too far for the arm of King James to reach. What say ye all? Alice, what sayest thou?'

'Truly, Brother, I say nothing.'

'Then we will agree, and go with them.'

We went on board, taking with us a good

supply of turtle, clear water, and cocoanuts (being all that the isle afforded). Honest fellows we found our pirates to be. They belonged to the island of Providence, in the Bahamas, which hath long been the rendezvous of English privateers. Ten years before this the Spaniards plucked up courage to attack and destroy the settlement, when those who escaped destruction found shelter in some of the adjacent islands, or on the mainland of Virginia. Now some of them have come back again, and this settlement, or colony, is re-established.

Thither, therefore, we sailed. It seemed as if we were become a mere shuttlecock of fortune, beaten and driven hither and thither upon the face of the earth.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE ISLAND OF PROVIDENCE.

IT was some time in the month of March, A.D. 1686, that we landed in Providence. The settlement—from which the Spaniards had now nothing to fear—then consisted (it is now, I learn, much larger) of no more than one hundred and fifty people in all, the men being all sailors, and ready to carry on again the old trade of privateer or pirate, as you please to call it, when they should be strong enough to buy or hire a ship and to equip her.

We stayed on the island for two years and a quarter, or thereabouts. It is one of an archipelago, for the most part, I believe, desert. The settlement was, as I have said, but a small one, living in scattered houses; there

were plenty of these to spare (which had belonged to the former settlement) if one only took the trouble to clear away the creeping plants and cut down the trees which had grown up round them since the Spaniards came and destroyed the colony. Such a house, built of wood, with a shingle roof, we found convenient for us; and after we had cleared the ground round it and repaired it, we lived in it. Some of the people helped us to a porker or two, and some chickens. They also gave us some salt beef and maize to start with. That we had little money (only what was left over from the sale of Alice's ring) made no difference to us here, because no one had any at all, and at this time there was neither buying nor selling on the island—a happy condition of things which will not, I take it, last long. So great is the fertility of the ground here, and such is the abundance which prevails, that we very shortly found ourselves provided with all that we wanted to make life pleasant. Work there was for us, but easy and pleasant work, such as weeding our

patches of vegetables and fruit in the early mornings; or going to fish; or planting maize; or attending to our pigs, poultry, and turkeys; and, for the rest of the time, sitting in the shade conversing. It is none too hot in this place, though one would not in the summer walk abroad at noon; nor is it ever too cold. All the fruits which flourish under the tropics grow here, with those also which belong to the temperate zone. Here are splendid forests where you can cut the mahogany-tree and build your house if you please of that lovely wood. Here we ourselves grew, for our own use, maize, tobacco, coffee, cocoa, plantains, pines, potatoes, and many other fruits and vegetables.

Barnaby soon grew tired of this quiet life, and went on board a schooner bound for New England, promising that we should hear from him. After two years we did receive a letter from him, as you shall immediately learn. When he was gone we carried on a quiet and peaceful life. Books, paper, and pen there were none upon this island. Nor were there

any clothes, so that the raggedness of our attire (we were dressed in the sailors' clothes our friends the privateers gave us) became incredible. I made some kind of guitar on which we played, and in the evening we would have very good playing and singing together of such pieces and songs as we could remember. I made verses, too, for amusement, and Alice learned them. We found our brother-settlers a rough but honest folk, to whom we taught many arts : how to procure sea-salt ; how to make wine from pine-apples ; how to cure the tobacco-leaf—things which greatly added to their comfort ; and, seeing that there was no church on the island, we every Sabbath held a meeting for prayer and exhortation.

Seeing, then, that we had all that man could desire—with perfect freedom from anxiety, our liberty, a delightful climate, plenty to eat and drink—ay, and of the very best—and that at home there was nothing for us but prison again, and to be sent back to the place whence we had escaped ; we ought, everyone will acknowledge, to have

felt the greatest contentment and gratitude for this sure and quiet refuge. We did not. The only contented members of our household were John Nuthall and the woman Deb, who cheerfully cultivated the garden and fed the poultry and the pigs (for we had now everything around us that is wanted to make life pleasant). Yet we were not contented. I could read the signs of impatience in the face whose changes I had studied for so long. Other women would have shown their discontent in ill-temper and a shrewish tongue. Alice showed hers in silence, sitting apart, and communing with herself. I dare say I also showed my discontent; for I confess that I now began to long vehemently for books. Consider, it was more than two years since I had seen a book! There were no books at all on the island of Providence—not one book, except a Bible or two, and, perhaps, a Book of Common Prayer. I longed, therefore, for the smell of leather bindings, the sight of books on shelves, and the holy company of the wise

and the ingenious. No one, again, could look upon Robin without perceiving that he was afflicted with a constant yearning for that which he could not have. What that was I understood very well, although he never opened his mind unto me.

Now, I confess that at this time I was grievously tormented with the thought that, Alice's marriage having been no true marriage —because, first, she was betrayed and deceived, and next, she had left her husband at the very church porch—there was no reason in the world why she should not disregard that ceremony altogether, and contract a marriage after her own heart. I turned this over in my mind a long while, and, indeed, I am still of the opinion that there would have been nothing sinful in such an act. But the law of the country would not so regard it. That is quite true. If, therefore, I had advised these unhappy lovers in such a sense, they would have been compelled to live for the rest of their lives on this island, and their offspring would have been illegitimate. So that though

the letter of the law caused a most cruel injustice—*summum jus summa injuria*—it was better that it should be obeyed. In the end, it was a most happy circumstance that it was so obeyed.

I have presently to relate the means by which this injustice was removed. As for my own share in it, I shall neither exaggerate nor shall I extenuate it. I shall not defend it. I will simply set it down, and leave judgment to a higher Court than the opinion of those who read these pages. I must, however, acknowledge that, partly in Barbadoes and partly in Providence, I learned from the negresses, who possess many secrets, and have a wonderful knowledge of plants and their powers, the simple remedies with which they treat fevers, agues, rheumatisms, and other common disorders. I say simple, because they will, with a single cup of liquor boiled with certain leaves, or with a pinch of some potent powder gotten from a plant, effect a speedier cure than our longest prescriptions, even though they contain more than fifty

different ingredients. Had I possessed this knowledge, for example, while we lay in Exeter Jail, not one prisoner (except the old and feeble) should have died of the fever. This said, you will understand presently what it was I did.

It was, then, about the month of March, in the year 1688, that a ship, laden with wine, and bound from New York to Jamaica, put in at the port of Providence. Her Captain carried a letter for me, and this was the first news of the world that came to us since our flight.

The letter was from Barnaby. It was short, because Barnaby had never practised the art of letter-writing ; but it was pertinent. First, he told us that he had made the acquaintance at Boston (I mean the little town Boston of New England) of his cousins, whom he found to be substantial merchants (so that here, at least, the man George Penne lied not) and zealous upholders of the Independent way of thinking ; that these cousins had given him a hearty welcome for the sake

of his father; that he had learned from them, first, that the Monmouth business was long since concluded, and, so great was the public indignation against the cruelties of the Bloody Assize, that no one would again be molested on that account, not even those who had been sent abroad should they venture to return. He also said—but this we understood not—that it was thought things would before long improve.

'And now,' he concluded, 'my cousins, finding that I am well skilled and have already navigated a ship with credit, have made me Captain of their own vessel, the Pilgrim, which sails every year to Bristol and back again. She will be despatched in the month of August or September. Come, therefore, by the first ship which will set you ashore either at New York or at Boston, and I will give you all a passage home. Afterwards, if you find not a welcome there, you may come back with me. Here a physician may find practice, Robin may find a farm, and Sister will be safe from B. B.'

At this proposal we pricked up our ears, as you may very well believe. Finally, we resolved to agree to it, promising each other to protect Alice from her husband and to go back to Boston with Barnaby if we found no reason to stay in England. But the woman Deb, though she wept at leaving her mistress, would not go back to the place where her past wickedness might be remembered, and John Nuthall was also unwilling, for the same reason, to return; and, as this honest couple had now a kindness for each other, I advised them to marry and remain where they were. There was on the island no minister of religion, nor any magistrate or form of Government whatever (yet all were honest), therefore I ventured to hear their vows of fidelity, and prayed with them while I joined their hands—a form of marriage, to my mind, as binding and as sacred as any wanting the assistance of a priest. So we handed over to them all our property (which was already as much theirs as ours) and left them in that sunny and delightful place. If the man was

a repentant thief, the woman was a repentant Magdalen, and so they were well matched. I hope and believe that, being well resolved for the future, they will lead a godly and virtuous life, and will be blessed with children who will never learn the reason why their parents left their native country.

There is little trade at Providence, but many vessels touch at the port, because it lies between the English possessions in America and those in the West Indies. They put in for water, for fruit, and sometimes, if they are short-handed, for men, most of them in the place being sailors. Therefore we had not to wait long before a vessel put in bound from Jamaica to New York. We bargained with the Captain for a passage, agreeing that he should find us provisions and wine, and that we would pay him (by means of Barnaby) on our reaching Boston (which is but a short distance from New York). Strange to say, though we had been discontented with our lot, when we sailed away, Alice fell to weeping. We had murmured, and our murmuring was

heard. We should now be permitted to live out what was left to us of life in England, and we should die and be buried among our own folk. Yet there are times when I remember the sweet and tranquil life we led in the island of Providence, its soft and sunny air, the cool sea-breeze, the shade of its orange groves, and the fruits which grew in such abundance to our hands.

CHAPTER XLIX.

HOME.

IN one thing alone the villain Penne spoke the truth. The Eykin family of Boston (I say again of New England) was one of the most considerable in the place—great sticklers for freedom and for religion (but, indeed, it is a most God-fearing town, and severe towards transgressors). They received us with so much kindness that nothing could surpass it; we were treated as Christian martyrs at the least, and towards Alice, of whose cruel lot they had heard from Barnaby, they showed (but that no one could help) an affection quite uncommon. They generously furnished us all with apparel becoming our station, and with money for our daily occasions; they approved of our

going with Barnaby ; but, in the event of our finding no welcome or means of a livelihood at home, and if Alice should be molested by her husband, they engaged us to return to New England. Here, they said, Robin might become a farmer, if he had no inclination for trade ; they would joyfully receive Alice to live with them ; and I myself would certainly find practice as a physician ; while Barnaby should continue to command their ship. When I considered the many conveniences which exist in Boston (it is already, though young, better provided with everything than Barbadoes)—the excellence of the climate, the books which are there, the printing press which hath already been established, the learned ministers, the college, the schools, and the freedom of religion—I should have been nothing loth to remain there. But I was constrained first to go home. I found also, which astonished me, so great a love of liberty that the people speak slightingly of English at home who tamely suffer the disabilities of the Nonconformists and the prerogative of the Crown ;

and they ask why, when the country had succeeded in establishing a Commonwealth, they could not keep it ? It certainly cannot be denied, as they argue, that Israel acted against the declared will of the Lord in seeking a King.

So we left them. But in how changed a condition did we now cross the ocean ! Instead of huddling in a noisome and stinking dungeon, unclean for want of water, ill-fed, and with no change of raiment, we had now comfortable cabins, clothes such as become a gentleman, and food of the best. And Barnaby, who had then sat humbly in the waist, where the prisoners were confined, now walked the quarter-deck—a laced kerchief round his neck, lace ruffles at his wrist, a scarlet coat on his back, a sword at his side, and gold lace in his hat : the Captain of the ship.

The winds were contrary, and it was not until the last days of October that we arrived at Bristol. Here we lay for a few days, while Barnaby transacted his business, resolving to

remain in retirement, for fear of accidents, until our Captain should be ready to ride with us to Bradford Orcas.

The first news we learned was joyful indeed. It was that the Prince of Orange himself was about to invade England, with intent to drive his father-in-law from the throne. (He had indeed already sailed, but his fleet was driven back by a storm.) It was also stated that he had with him a great army of Dutch and English, and such preparations of arms and ammunition as (it was hoped) would make such a failure as that of our unhappy Duke impossible.

We also confirmed Barnaby's information that Monmouth's men could now go about without fear or molestation.

As to the position of affairs at Bradford Orcas, we could learn nothing.

There was one point on which I was curious —namely as to what Barnaby would do in the matter of the villain Penne. On the one hand it was certain that Barnaby would not forget this man, nor was he likely to sit down with

his arms folded after he had been robbed of so great a sum.

Therefore, I was not surprised when, the evening before we rode out of Bristol, he brought a big bag of blue stuff in his hands and poured out the contents—a vast shower of gold pieces—into the lap of his astonished sister.

'Alice,' he said, 'I bring you back your money. You will find it all here, and Mr. Boscorel's money to boot. He hath disgorged.'

With that he sat down and laughed, but as one who hath a joke in secret and would tell us no more.

For a day or two after this he would (on the road to Bradford Orcas) begin to laugh at intervals, rolling about in his saddle, shaking his sides, choking with laughter; insomuch that I presently lost patience with him, and, as a physician, ordered him instantly to make full confidence, or I would not answer for it but he would have a fit.

Then he told us what he had done.

Towards five in the afternoon, when the

autumn day is ended, he repaired to the man Penne's counting-house (a place easily found on inquiry), having with him one of those fellows who bawl at fairs, selling medicines and charms, drawing teeth, letting blood, and so forth. At the sight of a sea Captain, many of whom came to this place, the worthy merchant's servant, without suspicion, opened the door of the private office, or chamber, where Mr. Penne transacted his affairs. Barnaby found him dozing by the fire, his wig on the table, a silk handkerchief over his head, and the candles already lighted.

He awoke, however, on the opening of the door.

'Friend,' said Barnaby, 'I am Captain Barnaby Eykin, commanding the ship Pilgrim, from Boston—at your service. I am also brother to the young woman Alice Eykin, whom you robbed ('twas my money) of two hundred and fifty pounds, and afterwards kidnapped.'

Mr. Penne looked about him, and would have cried out for assistance; but Barnaby

clapped a pistol to his forehead. Then he sank in his chair and gasped.

'Stir not,' said his enemy. 'I am also one of the three rebels for whose ransom the Reverend Philip Boscorel, Rector of Bradford Orcas, paid the sum of two hundred and ten pounds—which you have also stolen.'

'Sir,' said Mr. Penne, 'upon my honour those moneys were sent to Barbadoes. Upon my honour, Sir.'

'You will therefore,' said Barnaby, taking no heed of this assurance, 'pay over to me the sum of four hundred and sixty pounds, with interest at five per cent. for three years, which I have calculated; the whole amount is five hundred and twenty-nine pounds. Begin by paying this.' Well, to make a long story short, though the man protested that he had not so much in the world, yet he presently opened his strong-box and counted out the money, all in gold. This done, he hoped to be let off.

'There now remains,' said Barnaby, 'the punishment—and I forgot Sister's ring; I

ought to have added fifty pounds for that. But time presses. Perhaps I shall come back. I did intend to kill thee, brother, for thy great villainy. However'——

He then beckoned the man with him, who lugged out of his pocket an instrument which made Mr. Penne shake and quake with terror. Barnaby then informed his victim that, as he had been the means of inflicting grievous bodily suffering upon four undeserving people, it was meet and right that he himself should experience something which, by its present agony, should make him compassionate for the future, and by its permanence of injury should prevent his ever forgetting that compassion for the rest of his life.

He therefore, he told him, intended to draw from his head four of his stoutest and strongest grinders.

This, in a word, he did ; the man with him dragging them out with the pincers ; Barnaby holding the pistol to the poor wretch's head, so that he should not bellow and call for assistance.

'Barnaby holding the pistol to the poor wretch's head, so that he should not bellow and call for assistance.'

His laughter was caused by the remembrance of the twisting of the man's features in this agony, and by his moanings and groanings. The grinders he had brought away with him in his pocket, and showed them in triumph.

It was late in the afternoon when we rode into Bradford Orcas. The November sun, now setting, lay upon the woods, yellow and red with the autumn leaves not yet fallen. As we neared the village the sun went down, and a mist began to rise. All the doors were closed, and no one looked forth to greet us; the old cottage where Alice was born and where she lived so long was empty still; the door was open, the shutter hung upon one hinge; the honey hives were overturned, the thatch was broken; the garden was neglected.

'Why, Sis,' said Barnaby, 'thy mother is not there; nor Dad—is he?—poor old Dad!'

We rode up the village till we came to the church, and the Manor House beside it. Alas! the house itself was closed, which had

formerly stood open to all. There was no smoke from its chimneys, and the grass grew in the courtyard. We dismounted and opened the door, which was not locked. We went into the house: all was cold, and empty, and deserted. The twilight falling outside made the rooms dark. Beside the fireplace stood Sir Christopher's great chair, empty; his tankard was on the table and his tobacco-pipe, and—strange!—there lay, forgotten, the unhappy Duke's Proclamation.

Then a truly wonderful thing happened. Barnaby says that I must have dreamed it, for he saw nothing. Suddenly Sir Christopher himself appeared sitting in the chair; on his knees lay the Bible open. Beside him stood, with upraised forefinger, as if commenting on some knotty point, the Rev. Dr. Comfort Eykin. I declare that I saw them plainly, as plainly as I now behold the paper on which I write. They were but as shadows in the dark shadows of the empty room, and they appeared but for a moment and then vanished, and I saw them no more.

'Come to the Rectory,' said Robin: 'it chokes us to be here.'

'Listen,' said Alice, outside the house.

From the Rectory there came the sound of a violoncello. Then was the good Rector himself there, comforting his soul.

We opened the garden gate and walked softly across the lawn and looked in at the window ('twas made after the foreign fashion, to open upon the lawn). Beside the fire sat Madam, her hands clasped, thin, pale, and prematurely aged. Thus had she sat for three long years, still waiting for news of her son.

The Rector laid down his bow, crossed the room and sat down to the spinnet (on which he played prettily, but not with such command as he possessed over the other instrument). He played—I caught Alice's hand—an air of my own making to which I had set certain words, also of mine own.

Then, while he played, we began to sing outside the window, Alice singing treble, or first, I the second part, and Robin the bass,

as I had taught him in Providence Island, the words of that little song. We sang it *piano*, or softly, at first, and then *crescendo*, or louder:—

> As rides the moon in azure skies,
> The twinkling stars beside;
> As when in splendour she doth rise,
> Their lesser lights they hide.
> So beside Celia, when her face we see,
> All unregarded other maidens be.

When we began, softly, as I said, the Rector looked round him, playing still and listening. He thought the voices were in his own brain —echoes or memories of the past. Madam heard them, too, and sat up listening as one who listens in a dream. When we sang louder Madam sprang to her feet, and held out her arms—but the Rector played the verse quite through. Then he opened the window for us.

'My son! my son!' cried Madam.

CHAPTER L.

THE GREAT LORD CHANCELLOR.

BUT the Prince of Orange had already landed.

We learned this news next day, and you may be sure that we were in the saddle again and riding to Exeter, there to join his standard.

This we did with the full consent of Madam and of Alice. Much as we had suffered already, they would not deter us, because this thing would have been approved by Sir Christopher and Dr. Eykin. Therefore we went. As all the world knows, this expedition was successful. Yet was not Barnaby made an Admiral, nor was I made a Court Physician; we got, in fact, no reward at all, except that for Barnaby was procured a full

pardon on account of the homicide of his late master.

My second campaign, as everybody knows, was bloodless. To begin with, we had an army, not of raw country lads armed indifferently and untrained, but of veteran troops, fifteen thousand strong, all well equipped, and with the best General in Europe at their head. At first, indeed, such was the dread in men's minds caused by Lord Jeffreys' cruelties, few came in; yet, this was presently made up by what followed, when, without any fighting at all, the King's regiments melted away, his priests fled, and his friends deserted him. This was a very different business from that other, when we followed one whom I now know to have been a mere tawdry pretender, no better fitted to be a King than a vagabond actor at a fair is fit to be a Lord. Alas! what blood was wasted in that mad attempt! —of which I was myself one of the most eager promoters. I was then young, and I believed all that I was told by the conspirators in Holland; I took their list of well-wishers for

insurgents already armed and waiting only for a signal; I thought that the roll of noble names set down for sturdy Protestants was that of men already pledged to the Cause; I believed that the whole nation would rise at the first opportunity to turn out the priests; I even believed in the legitimacy of the Duke, and that against the express statement of his father (if King Charles was in reality his father), and I believed what they told me of his princely virtues, his knowledge of the art of war, and his heroic valour. I say that I believed all these things and that I became a willing and zealous tool in their hands. As for what those who planned the expedition believed, I know not; nor will anyone now ever learn what promises were made to the Duke, what were broken, and why he was, from the outset, save for a few days at Taunton, so dejected and disappointed. As for me, I shall always believe that the unhappy man—unwise and soft-hearted—was betrayed by those whom he trusted.

It is now an old tale, though King Mon-

mouth will not speedily be forgotten in the West Country, nor will the memory of the Bloody Assize. The brave lads who followed him are dead and buried; some in unhonoured graves hard by the place where they were hanged, some under the burning sun of the West Indies: the Duke himself hath long since paid the penalty of his rash attempt. All is over and ended, except the memory of it.

It is now common history, known to everybody, how the Prince of Orange lingered in the West Country, his army inactive, as if he knew (doubtless he was well informed upon this particular) that the longer he remained idle the more likely was the King's Cause to fall to pieces. There are some who think that if King James had risked an action he could not but have gained, whatsoever its event—I mean that, the blood of his soldiers once roused, they would have remained steadfast to him, and would have fought for him. But this he dared not to risk; wherefore the Prince did nothing,

while the King's regiments fell to pieces and his friends deserted him. It was in December when the Prince came to Windsor, and I with him, once more Chyrurgeon in a rebel army. While there I rode to London—partly with the intention of judging for myself as to the temper of the people; partly because, after so long an absence, I wished once more to visit a place where there are books and pictures; and partly because there were certain notes and herbs which I desired to communicate to the College of Physicians in Warwick-lane. It happened to be the very day when the King's first flight—that, namely, when he was taken in the Isle of Sheppey—became known. The streets in the City of London I found crowded with people hurrying to and fro, running in bands and companies, shouting and crying, as if in the presence of some great and imminent danger. It was reported and currently believed that the disbanded Irish soldiers had begun to massacre the Protestants. There was no truth at all in the report; but yet the bells were ringing from all the towers, the

crowds were exhorting each other to tear down and destroy the Romish chapels, to hunt for and to hang the priests, and especially Jesuits (I know not whether they found any), and to shout for the Prince of Orange. I stood aside to let the crowds (thus religiously disposed) run past, but there seemed no end to them. Presently, however (this was in front of the new Royal Exchange), there drew near another kind of crowd. There marched six or eight sturdy fellows bearing stout cudgels and haling along a prisoner. Round them there ran, shrieking, hooting, and cursing, a mob of a hundred men and more; they continually made attacks upon the guard, fighting them with sticks and fists; but they were always thrust back. I thought at first that they had caught some poor, wretched priest whom they desired to murder. But it proved to be a prize worth many priests. As they drew nearer, I discerned the prisoner. He was dressed in the garb of a common sailor with short petticoats (which they call slops), and a

jacket ; his cap had been torn off, leaving the bare skull, which showed that he was no sailor, because common sailors do not wear wigs ; blood was flowing down his cheek from a fresh wound ; his eyes rolled hither and thither in an extremity of terror ; I could not hear what he said, for the shouting of those around him, but his lips moved, and I think he was praying his guards to close in and protect him. Never, surely, was seen a more terror-stricken creature.

I knew his face. Once seen (I had seen it once) it could never be forgotten. The red and bloated cheeks, which even his fear could not make pale; the eyes, more terrible than have been given to any other human creature: these I could not forget—in dreams I see them still. I saw that face at Exeter, when the cruel Judge exulted over our misery and rejoiced over the sentence which he pronounced. Yea, he laughed when he told us how we should swing, but not till we were dead, and then the knife—delivering his sentence so that no single point of its horror should be lost to

us. Yes ; it was the face of Judge Jeffreys—none other—this abject wretch was that great Judge. Why, when we went back to our prison there were some who cast themselves upon the ground and for terror of what was to come fell into mere *dementia*. And now I saw him thus humbled, thus disgraced, thus threatened, thus in the last extremity and agony of terror.

They had discovered him, thus disguised and in hiding, at a tavern in Wapping, and were dragging him to the presence of the Lord Mayor. It is a long distance from Wapping to Guildhall, and they went but slowly, because they were beset and surrounded by these wolves who howled to have his blood. And all the way he shrieked and trembled for fear!

Sure and certain is the vengeance of the Lord!

This Haman, this unjust Judge, was thus suffering, at the hands of the savage mob, pangs far worse than those endured by the poor rustics whom he had delivered to the

executioner. I say worse, because I have not only read, but have myself proved, that the rich and the learned—those, that is, who live luxuriously and those who have power to imagine and to feel beforehand—do suffer far more in disease than the common ignorant folk. The scholar dies of terror before ever he feels the surgeon's knife, while the rustic bares his limb, insensible and callous, however deep the cut or keen the pain. I make no doubt, therefore, that the great Lord Chancellor, while they haled him all the way from Wapping to Guildhall, suffered as much as fifty ploughboys flogged at the cart-tail.

Many thousands there were who desired revenge upon him—I know not what revenge would satisfy the implacable, because revenge can do no more than kill the body; but his worst enemy should be satisfied with this, his dreadful fate. Even Barnaby, who was sad because he could get no revenge on his own account (he wanted a bloody battle, with the rout of the King's armies and the pursuit of a flying enemy, such as had happened at Sedge-

moor), was satisfied with the justice which was done to that miserable man. It is wonderful that he was not killed amidst so many threatening cudgels; but his guards prevented that, not from any love they bare him; but quite the contrary (more unforgiving faces one never saw); for they intended to hand him over to the Lord Mayor, and that he should be tried for all his cruelties and treacheries, and, perhaps, experience himself that punishment of hanging and disembowelling, which he had inflicted on so many ignorant and misled men.

How he was committed to the Tower, where he shortly died in the greatest torture of body as well as mind, everybody knows.

CHAPTER LI.

THE CONFESSION.

NOW am I come to the last event of this history, and I have to write down the confession of my own share in that event. For the others—for Alice and for Robin—the thing must be considered as the crown and completion of all the mercies. For me—what is it? But you shall hear. When the secrets of all hearts are laid open—then will Alice hear it also: what she will then say, or what think, I know not. It was done for her sake—for her happiness have I laid this guilt upon my soul. Nay, when the voice of conscience doth exhort me to repent, and to confess my sin, then there still ariseth within my soul, as it were, the strain of a joyful hymn, a song of gratitude

that I was enabled to return her to freedom and the arms of the man she loved. If any learned Doctor of Divinity, or any versed in that science which the Romanists love (they call it casuistry), should happen to read this chapter of confession, I pray that they consider my case, even though it will then be useless as far as I myself am concerned, seeing that I shall be gone before a Judge who will, I hope (even though my earthly affections do not suffer me to separate my sin from the consequences which followed), be more merciful than I have deserved.

While, then, I stood watching this signal example of God's wrath, I was plucked gently by the sleeve, and, turning, saw one whose countenance I knew not. He was dressed as a lawyer, but his gown was ragged and his bands yellow ; he looked sunk in poverty ; and his face was inflamed with those signs which proclaim aloud the habit of immoderate drinking.

'Sir,' he said, 'if I mistake not, you are Dr. Humphrey Challis ?'

'The same, Sir; at your service,' I replied, with some misgivings. And yet, being one of the Prince's following, there needed none.

'I have seen you, Sir, in the chambers of your cousin, Mr. Benjamin Boscorel, my brother learned in the law. We drank together, though (I remember) you still passed the bottle. It is now four or five years ago. I wonder not that you have forgotten me. We change quickly, we who are the jolly companions of the bottle; we drink our noses red, and we paint our cheeks purple; nay, we drink ourselves out of our last guinea, and out of our very apparel. What then, Sir? a short life and a merry. Sir, yonder is a sorry sight. The first Law Officer of the Crown thus to be haled along the streets by a howling mob. Ought such a thing to be suffered? 'Tis a sad and sorry sight, I say!'

'Sir,' I replied hotly, 'ought such villains as Judge Jeffreys to be suffered to live?'

He considered a little, as one who is astonished and desires to collect his thoughts.

Perhaps he had already taken more than a morning draught.

'I remember now,' he said. 'My memory is not so good as it was. We drink that away as well. Yes, I remember—I crave your forgiveness, Doctor. You were yourself engaged with Monmouth. Your cousin told me as much. Naturally you love not this good Judge, who yet did nothing but what the King, his master, ordered him to do. I, Sir, have often had the honour of sitting over a bottle with his Lordship. When his infirmities allowed (though not yet old, he is grievously afflicted) he had no equal for a song or a jest, and would drink so long as any were left to keep him company. Ha ! they have knocked him down—now they will kill him. No ; he is again upon his feet ; those who protect him close in. So—they have passed out of our sight. Doctor, shall we crack a flask together ? I have no money, unhappily ; but I will with pleasure drink at your expense.'

I remembered the man's face now, but not his name. 'Twas one of Ben's boon compan-

ions. Well; if hard drinking brings men so speedily to rags and poverty, even though it be a merry life (which I doubt), give me moderation.

'Pray, Sir,' I said coldly, 'to have me excused. I am no drinker.'

'Then, Doctor, you will perhaps lend me, until we meet again, a single guinea?'

I foolishly complied with this request.

'Doctor, I thank you,' he said. 'Will you now come and drink with me at my expense? Sir, I say plainly, you do not well to refuse a friendly glass. I could tell you many things, if you would but drink with me, concerning my Lord Jeffreys. There are things which would make you laugh. Come, Doctor; I love not to drink alone. Your cousin, now, was always ready to drink with any man, until he fell ill'——

'How? is my cousin ill?'

'Assuredly; he is sick unto death. Yesterday I went to visit him, thinking to drink a glass with him, and perhaps to borrow a guinea or two, but found him in bed and

raving. If you will drink with me, Doctor, I can tell you many curious things about your cousin. And now I remember, you were sent to the Plantations ; your cousin told me so. You have returned before your time. Well, the King hath run away ; you are, doubtless, safe. Your cousin hath gotten his grandfather's estate. Lord Jeffreys, who loved him mightily, procured that grant for him. When your cousin wakes at night he swears that he sees his grandfather by his bedside looking at him reproachfully, so that he drinks the harder ; 'tis a merry life. He hath also married a wife, and she ran away from him at the church door, and he now cannot hear of her or find her anywhere, so that he curses her and drinks the harder. Oh ! 'tis always the jolliest dog. They say that he is not the lawyer that he was, and that his clients are leaving him. All mine have left me long since. Come and drink with me, Doctor.'

I broke away from the poor toper who had drunk up his wits as well as his money, and hurried to my cousin's chambers, into which I

had not thought to enter save as one who brings reproaches—a useless burden.

Benjamin was lying in bed: an old crone sat by the fire, nodding. Beside her was a bottle, and she was, I found, half drunk. Her I quickly sent about her business. No one else had been attending him. Yet he was laid low, as I presently discovered, with that kind of fever which is bred in the villainous air of our prisons—the same fever which had carried off his grandfather.

Perhaps, if there were no foul and stinking wards, jails, and clinks, this kind of fever would be banished altogether, and be no more seen. So, if we could discover the origin and cause of all diseases, we might once more restore man to his primitive condition, which I take to have been one free from any kind of disease or infirmity, designed at first by his Creator so to live for ever, and, after the Fall, enabled (when medicine shall be so far advanced) to die of old age after such prolongation of life and strength as yet we cannot even understand.

'Cousin,' I said, 'I am sorry to find thee lying in this condition.'

'Ay,' he replied, in a voice weak and low, not like his old blustering tones. 'Curse me and upbraid me, if thou wilt. How art thou come hither? Is it the ghost of Humphrey? Art thou dead like my grandfather? Are we on the Plantations of Barbadoes?'

'Indeed, I am no ghost, Benjamin. As for curses, I have none; and as for reproaches, I leave them to thy conscience.'

'Humphrey, I am sore afflicted. I am now so low that I cannot even sit upright in my bed. But thou art a doctor—thou wilt bring me back to health. I am already better only for seeing thee here.'

I declare that as yet I had no thought, no thought at all, of what I was to do. I was but a physician in presence of a sick man, and therefore bound to help him if I could.

I asked him first certain questions, as physicians use, concerning his disorder and its symptoms. I learned that, after attending at the Court, he was attacked by fits of shivering

and of great heat, being hot and cold alternately, and that in order to expel the fever he had sat drinking the whole evening—a most dangerous thing to do. Next, that in the morning he had been unable to rise from his bed, and, being thirsty, had drunk more wine—a thing enough of itself to kill a man in such a fever. Then he lost his head, and could tell me no more what had happened until he saw me standing by his bedside. In short, he had been in delirium and was now in a lucid interval, out of which he would presently fall a-wandering again, and, perhaps, raving, and so another lucid interval, after which he would die unless something could be done for him. I liked not his appearance nor the account which he gave me, nor did I like his pulse, or the strange look in his eyes—death doth often show his coming by such a prophetic terror of the eyes.

'Humphrey,' he said pitifully. 'It was no fault of mine that thou wast sent to the Plantations.'

'That I know full well, Cousin,' I answered him. 'Be easy on that score.'

'And as for Alice,' he went on, 'all is fair in love.'

I made no reply, because at this point a great temptation assailed my soul.

You have heard how I learned many secrets of the women while I was abroad. Now, while we were in Providence Island I found a woman of the breed they call half caste—that is, half Indian and half Portuguese—living in what she called wedlock with an English sailor, who did impart to me a great secret of her own people. I obtained from her not only the knowledge of a most potent drug (known already to the Jesuits) but also a goodly quantity of the drug itself. This, with certain other discoveries and observations of my own, I was about to communicate to the College in Warwick-lane.

As for this drug, I verily believe it is the most potent medicine ever yet discovered. It is now some years since it was first brought over to Europe by the Jesuits, and is therefore called *Pulvis Jesuiticus*, and sometimes Peruvian Bark. When administered at such a

stage of the fever as had now been reached by my unhappy cousin, it seldom fails to vivify the spirits and so to act upon the nerves as to restore the sinking, and to call back to life a man almost moribund.

Remembering this, I lugged the packet out of my pocket and laid it on the table.

'Be of good cheer, Cousin,' I said; 'I have a drug which is strong enough, with the help of God, to make a dying man sit up again. Courage, then!'

When I had said these words my temptation fell upon me. It came in the guise of a voice which whispered in my ear.

'Should this man die,' it said, 'there will be freedom for Alice. She can then marry the man she loves. She will be restored to happiness. While he lives, she must still continue in misery, being cut off from love. Let him die, therefore.'

'Humphrey,' said Ben; 'in this matter of Alice: if she will come to me, I will make

her happy. But I know not where she is hidden. Things go ill with me since that unlucky day. I would to God I had not done it! Nothing hath gone well since; and I drink daily to hide her face. Yet at night she haunts me—with her father, who threatens, and her mother, who weeps, and my grandfather, who reproaches. Humphrey—tell me —what is it, man? What mean thy looks?'

For while he spoke that other voice was in my ears also.

'Should he die, Alice will be happy again. Should he live, she will continue in misery.' At these words (which were but my own thoughts, yet involuntary), I felt so great a pity, such an overwhelming love for Alice, that my spirit was wholly carried away. To restore her freedom! Oh! what price was too great for such a gift? Nay—I was seized with the thought that to give her so great a thing, even my own destruction would be a light price to pay. Never, until that moment, had I known how fondly and truly I loved her. Why, if it were to be done over

again—but this matters not. I have to make my confession.

'Humphrey, speak!' I suppose that my trouble showed itself in my face.

'Thou art married to Alice,' I said slowly. 'That cannot be denied. So long as thou livest, Benjamin, so long will she be robbed of everything that she desires, so long will she be unhappy. Now, if thou shouldst die'——

'Die? I cannot die; I must live.' He tried to raise himself, but he was too weak. 'Cousin, save my life.'

'If thou shouldst die, Benjamin,' I went on, regardless of his words, 'she will be set free. It is only by thy death that she can be set free. Say then to thyself: "I have done this poor woman so great an injury that nothing but my death can atone for it. Willingly, therefore, will I lay down my life, hoping thus to atone for this abominable wickedness."'

'Humphrey, do not mock me. Give me—give me—give me speedily the drug of which

you spoke. I die—I die !—Oh !—give me of thy drug.'

Then I took the packet containing the *Pulvis Jesuiticus* and threw it upon the fire, where in a moment it was a little heap of ashes.

'Now, Benjamin,' I said, 'I cannot help thee. Thou must surely die.'

He shrieked, he wept, he implored me to do something—something to keep him alive. He began to curse and to swear.

'No one can now save thee, Benjamin,' I told him. 'Not all the College of Physicians ; not all the medicines in England. Thou must die. Listen and heed : in a short time, unless thy present weakness causeth thee to expire, there will fall upon thee another fit of fever and delirium, after which another interval of reason : perhaps another—but yet thou must surely die. Prepare thy soul, therefore. Is there any message for Alice that thou wouldst send to her, being now at the point of death ?'

His only answer was to curse and weep alternately.

Then I knelt beside his bed, and prayed

aloud for him. But incessantly he cried for help, wearing himself out with prayers and curses.

'Benjamin,' I said, when I had thus prayed a while, but ineffectually, 'I shall take to Alice, instead of these curses, which avail nothing, a prayer for pardon, in order to touch her heart and cause her to think of thee with forgiveness, as of one who repented at the end. This I shall do for her sake. I shall also tell thy father that thy death was repentant, and shall take to him also a prayer for forgiveness as from thee. This will lighten his sorrow, and cause him to remember thee with the greater love. And to Robin, too, so that he may cease to call thee villain, I will carry, not these ravings, but a humble prayer (as from thyself) for forgiveness.'

This is my confession: *I, who might have saved my cousin, suffered him to die.*

The sick man, when he found that prayers or curses would not avail, fell to moaning,

rolling his head from side to side. When he was thus quiet I prayed again for him, exhorting him to lift up his soul to his Judge, and assuring him of our full forgiveness. But, indeed, I know not if he heard or understood. It was then about four of the clock, and growing dark. I lit a candle, and examined him again. I think that he was now unconscious. He seemed as if he slept. I sat down and watched.

I think that at midnight, or thereabouts, I must have fallen asleep.

When I awoke the candle was out, and the fire was out. The room was in perfect darkness. I laid my hand upon my cousin's forehead. He was cold and dead.

Then I heard the voice of the watchman in the street: 'Past two o'clock, and a frosty morning!'

The voice I had heard before whispered again in my ear.

'Alice is free—Alice is free! Thou—thou—thou alone hast set her free! Thou hast killed her husband!'

I threw myself upon my knees and spent the rest of that long night in seeking for repentance: but then, as now, the lamentation of a sinner is also mingled with the joy of thinking that Alice was free at last, and by none other hand than mine.

This, I repeat, is my confession: *I might have saved my cousin, and I suffered him to die.* Wherefore I have left the profession in which it was my ambition to distinguish myself, and am no longer anything but a poor and obscure person, living on the charity of my friends in a remote village.

Two days afterwards I was sitting at the table, looking through the dead man's papers, when I heard a footstep on the stair.

It was Barnaby, who broke noisily into the room.

'Where is Benjamin?' he cried. 'Where is that villain?'

'What do you want with him?'

'I want to kill him. I am come to kill him.'

'Look upon the bed, Barnaby.' I laid back the sheet and showed him the pale face of the dead man.

'The hand of the Lord—or that of another—hath already killed him. Art thou now content?'

CHAPTER THE LAST.

IN the decline of years, when the sixtieth birthday is near at hand and one looks not to live much longer, and the future hath no fresh joy to bring with it (but only infirmities of age and pain), it is profitable and pleasant to look back upon the past, to observe the guidance of the Unseen Hand, to repent one's sins, and to live over again those seasons, whether of sorrow or of joy, which we now perceive to have been Providentially ordered.

This have I done, both in reading the history of our lives as related by my Mistress, and in writing this latter part. To the former have I added nothing, nor have I subtracted anything therefrom, because I would not suffer the sweet and candid soul of her

whom I have always loved to be tarnished by any words of mine, breaking in upon her own, as jarring notes in some lovely harmony. It is strictly laid upon me to deliver her words just as she hath written them down.

Now, after the death of Benjamin, I took it upon myself, being his cousin, in the absence of his father, to examine the papers which he had left. Among them I found abundance of songs, chiefly in praise of wine and women, with tavern bills. Also, there were notes of legal cases, very voluminous, and I found notes of payment made to various persons engaged in inquiring after his wife, in those towns of the West Country where her father's name would procure friends for her. But there was no will; Benjamin had died (never looking for so early an end) without making any will. Therefore, all his estate, including the manor of Bradford Orcas (indeed, he had nothing else), now belonged to Alice, a widow who had never been a wife.

. . . . .

It is thirty years ago and more. King William III. is dead; Queen Anne is dead; King George (who cannot, they say, speak English, but is a stout Protestant) sits upon our throne; the Nonconformists are free, save that they cannot enter the Universities, and are subject to other disabilities, which will, doubtless, be removed in the course of years. But English people, I think, love power beyond all earthly things; and so long as the Church is in a majority the churchmen will exercise their power and will not part with it. To us of Bradford Orcas it matters little. We worship at the parish church. Every Sunday I contemplate, as I did fifty years ago, the monument of Filipa kneeling apart, and of her husband and his second wife kneeling together. There is a new tablet in the chancel put up to the memory of Sir Christopher, and another to that of Dr. Comfort Eykin. Their bodies lie somewhere among the mounds on the north side of Ilminster Church.

Forty years ago, as you have seen, there

stood three boys in the garden of the Manor House discoursing on their future. One wished never to go anywhere, but to remain always a country gentleman, like his grandfather; one would be a great lawyer, a Judge, even the Lord Chancellor; the third would be a great Physician. Lo! the end of all! The first, but after divers miseries, perils, and wanderings, hath attained to his desire; the second lies buried in the churchyard of St. Andrew's, Holborn, forgotten long since by his companions (who, indeed, are now with him in the pit), and remembered only among his own kin for the great wickedness which he wrought before the Lord. And, as for the third and last, no illustrious physician is he; but one who lives obscure (but content) in a remote village (in the very cottage where his Mistress was born), with books and music, and the society of the sweetest woman who ever graced this earth for his solace. She was always gracious: she was gracious in her childhood; gracious as a maiden; more gracious still is she in these

latter days when her hair is grey, and her daughters stand about her, tall and comely.

Now, had I administered that powder—that sovereign remedy, the *Pulvis Jesuiticus*—what would have been her lot?

'Humphrey,' said Robin, 'a penny for thy thoughts.'

'Robin, I was thinking—it is not a new thing, but twenty years old and more—that Cousin Benjamin never did anything in his life so useful as to die.'

'Ay, poor Benjamin! That he had at the end the grace to ask our forgiveness and to repent hath in it something of a miracle. We have long forgiven him. But consider, Cousin. We were saved from the fight; we were saved from the sea; we were saved from slavery; we were enabled to strike the last blow for the Protestant religion—what were all these blessings worth if Benjamin still lived? To think, Humphrey, that Alice would never have been my wife and never a mother; and all these children would have remained unborn! I say

that, though we may not desire the death of a sinner, we were not human if we rejoiced not at the death of our poor cousin.'

Yes; that is the thought which will not suffer me to repent. A single pinch of the *Pulvis Jesuiticus*, and he might have been living unto this very day: then would Alice have lost the crowning blessing of a woman's life.

Yet—I was, it is true, a physician—whose duty it is to save life, always to save life, even the life of the wretched criminal who is afterwards to die upon the gallows.

Yet, again, if he had been saved! As I write these lines I see my Mistress walking down the village street. She looks over my garden-gate; she lifts the latchet and enters, smiling gravely and tenderly. A sober happiness sits upon her brow. The terror of her first marriage has long been forgotten.

Why, as I watch her tranquil life, busy with her household and her children, full of the piety which asks not (as her father was

wont to ask) how and where the mercy of Heaven is limited, and if, indeed, it will embrace all she loves; as I mark the tender love of husband and of children, which lies around her like a garment and prevents all her doings, there comes back to me continually a bedroom in which a man lies dying. Again, in memory, again in *intention*, I throw upon the fire that handful of *Pulvis Jesuiticus* which should have driven away his fever and restored him to health again. A great and strong man he was, who might have lived till eighty years: where then would have been that love? where those children? where that tranquil heart and that contented mind? *'I WILL NOT SAVE HIS LIFE.'* I say again in my mind: *'I WILL NOT SAVE HIM; HE SHALL DIE.'*

'Humphrey,' my Mistress says, 'leave thy books a while and walk with me; the winter sun is warm upon the hills. Come, it is the day when Benjamin died—repentant—what better could we wish? What greater blessing

could have been bestowed upon him and upon us than a true repentance and to die? Oh! dear Brother, dear Humphrey, let us walk and talk of these blessings which have been showered upon my undeserving head.'

THE END.

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